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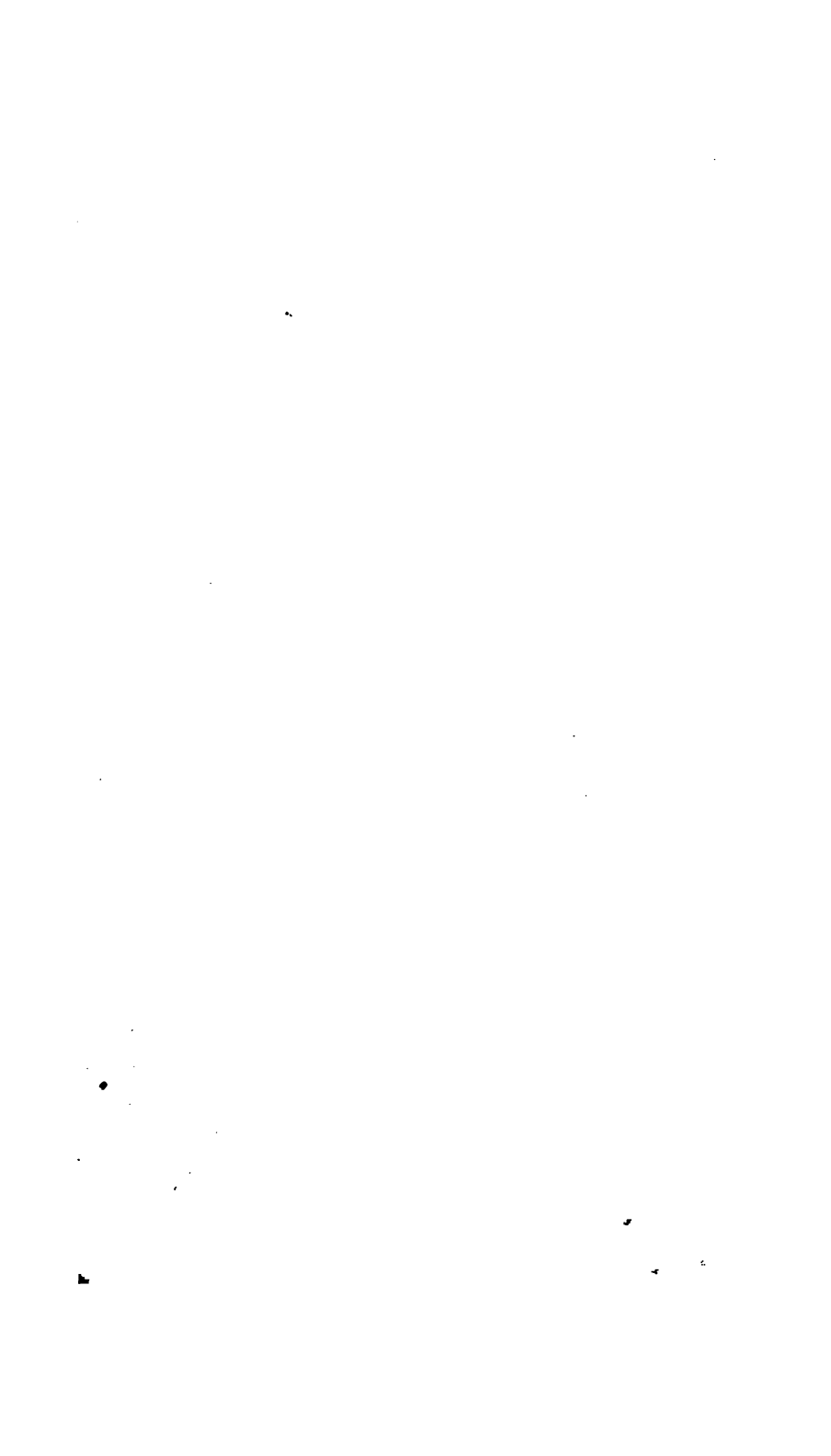




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# A STORMY LIFE.

A Novel.

BY

LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON,

AUTHOR OF "LADY BIRD," "TOO STRANGE NOT TO BE TRUE," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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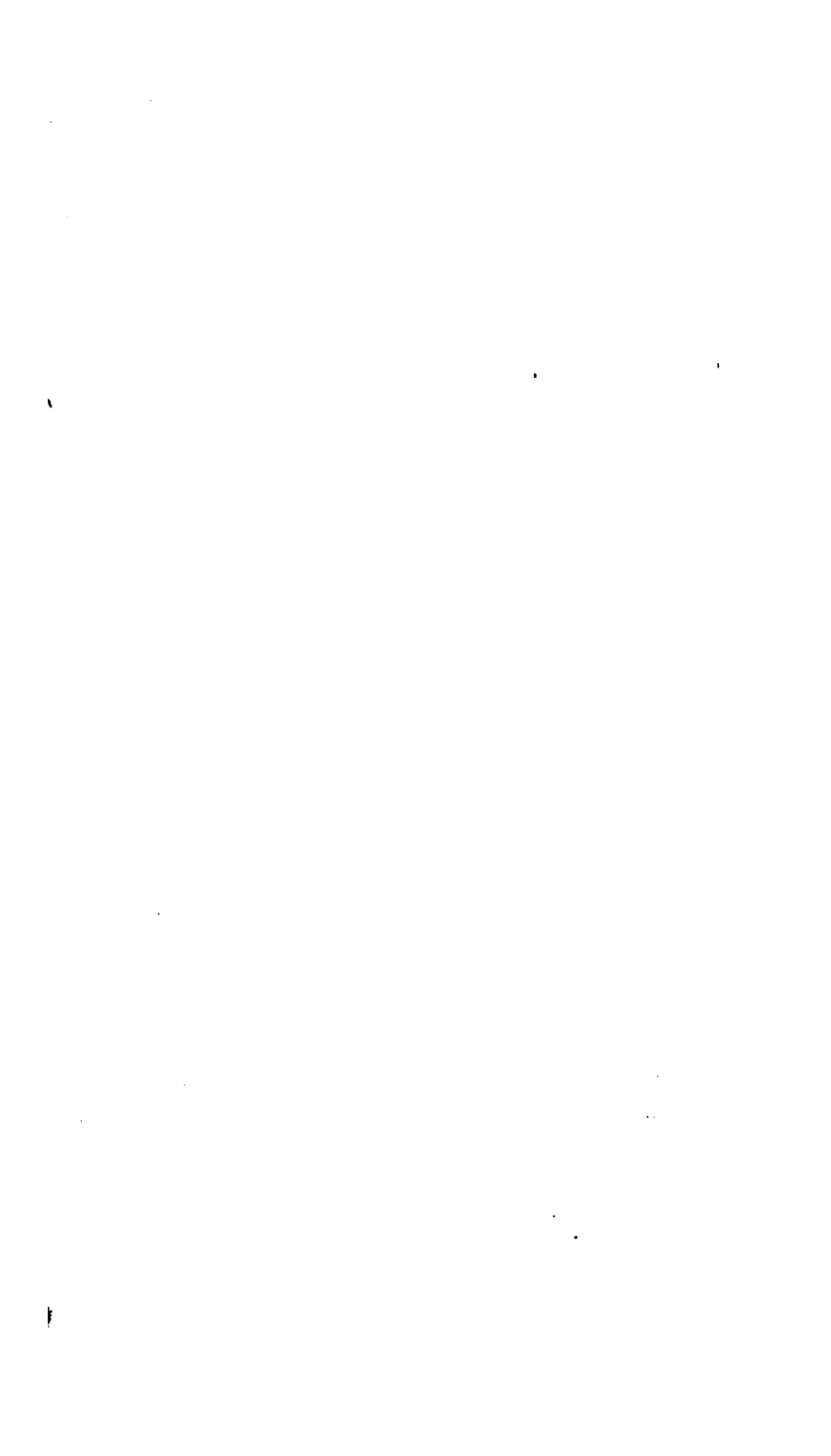
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# A STORMY LIFE.



## CHAPTER I.

### THE GODDESHOUSE AT PORTSMOUTH.

ON the 10th day of the month of April of the year 1445, the maids of honour of the Queen, of which she who writeth this was one, were conducted by their mistress, the Lady de Scales, to the Goddeshouse at Portsmouth, there to await her majesty's landing—a goodly set of maidens, of which only one, in her own thinking at least, was a disparagement to the rest. The Queen's arrival was somewhat delayed by reason of a foul wind, which such as were not well pleased that the king's majesty should wed the French king's niece called a good English breeze; but we her grace's servants turned bedeswomen in

those days, and said many hundred Aves for it to change ; and with a yet greater fervour when we beheld our lodgings at the hospital, the chambers of which were built only with planks, very homely, and not clean, and the pallets we had to lie on and the cheer provided for us exceeding mean. Verily the religious house where we had slept the night before at Holy Cross was a palace to this one. The cold was likewise so sharp, that some of our company shivered as if they had the ague, until a large brasier was set in the midst of the hall, around which we gathered like moths about a candle.

When the pleasant warmth had comforted their frozen limbs, the wits of the damsels began to brighten also, and their tongues to wag ; mostly at first touching the groans of the roaring wind and the rain, which was falling through the chimney and wetting the floor. One said that a vessel had been seen not very far off the coast which was thought to be the Queen's ship ; but that it was not like to come into port that day, the gale being too strong.

“There are folks so unmannerly as to

praise this ill-natured weather which keeps the French Queen from landing," said Mistress Allianor Daubeney, shaping her small mouth as if she feared her words should issue from it too fast.

"For the which speech they should be hung by the neck," cried Lady Isabel Butler; one of the ladies of the court which the most of us misliked for her haughty stomach and proud carriage.

"Heavens! how that wind doth moan, like unto a soul in jeopardy!" quoth Elizabeth de Scales, stopping her ears.

"Methinks," said Mary Beaumont, "we should say some prayers for her majesty, for the storm waxeth more fierce every moment. See how the white edges of the great waves betoken a rough and dangerous sea."

"Is this the first time you have bethought yourself of praying for the Queen, Mistress Beaumont?" asked Lady Isabel, in that jeering fashion which she often used, to the no small discomfort of timid persons. "I ween there are some, it may be not so forward to counsel others, which nevertheless have not neglected that duty."

“For my part,” sighed Joan Dacre, “I forgot to say my prayers this morn ; I was so sick with early rising and the bad fare at Holy Cross.”

One little Winefred Booth, the daughter of the Queen’s chancellor, Master John Wenlock, which, albeit only four years of age, because of her mother’s death, who was the King’s foster sister, was numbered amongst the maids of honour, slipt off my lap when she heard the others talk of prayers, and straightway kneeling on the floor, said a Pater Noster out loud, and then with a great bound exclaimed, “Winefred hath prayed. Is the Queen come?” which made us merry.

“I warrant you,” sighed Elizabeth Beauchamp, “that, laughing or no laughing, I shall die of this Goddeshouse, if so be we must abide many days waiting for this ‘pearl,’ as the Duke Charles of Orleans styleth her majesty.”

“A costly pearl she doth prove,” Lady Isabel replied. “The King, like the merchant in the gospel, hath sold all he hath to buy it. His jewels he hath parted with, and pawned the third part of the collar of St.

George, whereof two parts are already engaged to my lord the cardinal, for to raise money for the Queen's journey, and the wedding and the crowning, which are yet to come. I admire that kings should be so poor, when some of their subjects have so much wealth. If I were his majesty, beshrew me if I would not lay my hands on the cardinal's coffers, or impose round taxes on the greasy citizens of London."

"The king's majesty would not reign long an he followed your counsel," Mary Beaumont cried. "The saints deliver us from your queenship, Lady Isabel!"

"To my thinking," said Elizabeth Beauchamp, "that is as leal a prayer as any of the King's subjects could frame."

Lady Isabel's eyes flashed with anger; and drawing up her long neck, like an angry bird, she exclaimed, "There are subjects which should have brought the King, an he had wedded them, a richer dower than this French pearl; and then Maine and Anjou, those fair jewels of his crown, should not have been lost."

After a pause, Joan Dacre said: "Me-

thinks the new Queen should be very fair, sith she has no tocher. But, I pray you, is not her father the king of Jerusalem? I ween the pilgrims which go thither are like to take him presents, and so he should be rich. I admire that he gives his daughter no dower, and taketh from us Maine and Anjou, when he hath Jerusalem, which Friar Bradley of Norwich said, in a sermon I heard last Sunday, was built of gold and precious stones."

We could not choose but laugh a little at this speech ; and Lady Isabel broke forth : " I' faith, Mistress Dacre, I am astonished at your learning and good memory, and I hope you will interpret this praise as charity doth warrant. But if there be any here present not so well informed as yourself, I can learn them that King René hath a better title to the name of Lackland than ever had our King John ; for he holdeth not one foot of ground in Judea, nor yet now in Naples or Sicily ; and even a great part of Lorraine he is reft of, for the Duke of Burgundy, his sworn foe, is leagued with the Vaudémonts to despoil him of it."

" He is a prince," said Lady Ann de la

Pole, "of great parts, and a very sweet poet. The music he composes is so delectable, that none like unto it can be heard."

"And M. de Champchévrier says a more brave knight and pious and generous king can nowhere be found, not in all Christendom," Mary Beaumont added.

"Who is M. de Champchévrier?" asked Elizabeth Woodville, the Duchess of Bedford's daughter, then for the first time opening her lips.

Mary answered: "He was a prisoner of Sir John Fastolf's since the battle of Agincourt; and I promise you, ladies, but that for the cunning dealings of this gentleman Bonne d'Armagnac should have been queen of this realm."

Lady Isabel lifted up her eyes, and then half closed them, so much as to say: "Mercy on us! what a new tale is this! how that young damsel's tongue doth wag!"

But taking no heed of her grimaces, Mary went on: "The chevalier, who is a knight of Anjou, was the first to speak to his majesty of Madame Marguerite, and by his praises to set him thinking on her."



“Nay,” quoth Lady Isabel ; “if report speaketh truly, that should have been the doing of my lord the cardinal, to spite his grace of Gloucester.”

“And I have heard it said,” Lady Ann timidly uttered, “that my father was the cause of that change in the King’s mind.”

“I cry you mercy, ladies,” Mary replied. “But my knowledge in this matter cannot be gainsayed, as you shall presently see. When this gentleman was Sir John’s prisoner on parole at Caistor, I used often to meet him at Master Paston’s house, whither he went for hawking and such-like diversions. He often conversed with me, because I could speak French, and told me little tales, chiefly about King René’s children, which he said were the most beautiful ever seen, and the fairest of all Madame Marguerite, which although then only a bud, was like to prove the most perfect flower in the whole world ; and that her wit was so great, that if King Solomon had been alive, he alone would have been worthy of her. This always made me laugh, and was a jest between us ; so that whensoever I saw him I was wont

to say—for in those days I had a nimble tongue for my years—”

“Nay,” interrupted my Lady Peacock, for by this name we called that vain Isabel Butler, “this should seem now an incredible thing!”

“Go on, go on, good Moll,” we all cried, not well pleased that she should be jeered at; and so unheeding that remark, she continued:

“I was wont to say to him, ‘Well, Monsieur, how fares it with the wife of King Solomon?’ At which question he smiled, and sometimes answered that the Comte de St. Pol should be Solomon, or else that there was no prince on earth so great and excellent as to be worthy of the pearl of Anjou. But one day he came to our house in as gleesome a mood as can be thought of. ‘The King,’ he said, ‘had sent for him to Windsor.’ He was a very curious limner of emblems and devices, and had painted a Missal so rarely ornamented with scrolls and minute pictures, that Master Westbury greatly desired his majesty should see it; and hence this summons to the court. We bade him God speed, and thought no more of it, until a short time afterwards, my father going to Caistor, touching some lands

he had sold to Sir John, he found that good knight in so fierce a rage that nothing could be greater. He raved and stormed anent the French like unto a demented person, and swore, by the white beard and the black beard, he should have his revenge, for that the Chevalier had broken his parole and left England, without so much as one word touching his ransom, and that he should sue the Duke of Gloucester, who was a very good lord to him and his friend, to demand of the King of France that this caitiff be arrested and sent in chains to this country; and he went on in this manner for more than an hour, interspersing his speech with oaths not a few. A few weeks later we went to London; and when we had been there only two days, and had heard talk ministered for the first time of the King's marriage with Madame Marguerite, who should visit us at our lodgings but this false chevalier, with as gay a visage and bold carriage as if he had been one of the knights of the round-table? A less confused gentleman I never beheld. He then disclosed to us the cause of his absence, and described in a lively manner, as only French-

men know how to do, his first interview with the King, and the cunning praises he bestowed on Madame Marguerite, whose charms and excellences he portrayed so as to inspire his majesty with a passion for this unseen Princess, and an ardent desire to judge himself of her beauty ; so that after three or four interviews with the knight, he charged him to travel with speed and secrecy to France, under cover of a safe-conduct in his own hand, and to confer with my Lord Suffolk, his plenipotentiary at Paris, touching the likeness of the Princess, which he would have painted by the best limner which could be procured, in her simple kirtle, and as like as if she was seen. My lord was nothing loth to aid in this matter ; and betwixt them they despatched a very cunning painter to Nancy, which in an incredible short time achieved his work ; and the chevalier, with equal diligence, hastened with it to England. But as he passes through Paris, lo and behold he is arrested for his breach of parole, and thrust into prison ; but Lord Suffolk, being apprised of it, dealt with the King of France to release him, and to grant him an interview. Methinks I can see

the messenger's sly visage when, kneeling before his majesty, he drew from his breast in the one hand the King of England's safe-conduct, and in the other the portrait of Madame Marguerite.

“ ‘By our Lady of Liesse,’ the French king exclaimed, ‘this is verily a surprise! We listed not the wind had set that way. I’ faith, sir knight, if you have had a hand in this matter, we commend you. It had been reported to us that our fair nephew, the King of England, moved by the Dukes of Gloucester and Burgundy, was sueing for the hand of one of the Comte d’Armagnac’s daughters, and that one Hans had been employed to portray the three damsels, for the better guidance of his choice. But he should have been a cunning limner to have painted them in such guise as to rival *this* lovely face!’

“ ‘Sire,’ quoth the knight, ‘the Duke of Gloucester did verily send his favourite painter to the count’s court on this message; but Hans, an it please your majesty, is a Dutchman.’

“ ‘And you, sir knight, a Frenchman!’ the king exclaimed, laughing, ‘and so suf-

fered not the grass to grow under your feet, like the good Hollander. Go to, go to, M. de Champchévrier : we command your speed and your good service ; and albeit our treasury is scantily replenished at this time, we will ourselves satisfy the Chevalier Fastolf touching your ransom, and you shall find us in the future well disposed to show you favour.'

"Whereupon the knight departed, well pleased to have served both his masters and his own fortunes also, which is not often found to be possible. And thus ended his recital, if I except—"

"O, I pray you, except nothing," cried Lady Isabel, with an unmannerly yawn, which behaviour on her part cut short Mary's discourse, who said in a good-humoured voice :

"I crave your pardon, ladies, for this over-long tale ; which, nevertheless, I thought to have some curiosity in it."

"Yea, and much pleasantness also," we most of us answered ; but Lady Isabel could not restrain her ill temper.

"For all that chevalier's boasting," she cried, "I misdoubt his being the first mover of the king's marriage. I'll warrant you the

cardinal had the chiefest hand in it, and used him as his tool. Men can always make women believe what they like, howsoever shallow fools they be."

Then we all wax dull and sleepy ; and silence ensued, until the sound of a horse galloping, and then the jingling of spurs, and a quick tread along the cloisters, with much shuffling and noise of footsteps, waked us up.

The Lady de Scales was loudly called for, and her daughter, Mistress Elizabeth, said she should go and see if her mother had need of her ; a piece of dutifulness which I ween served her turn very well at that moment.

"Think you there are tidings of the Queen?" we all asked of one another. In a little space of time the door opened ; and who should come in with Lady de Scales but one concerning which my pen is somewhat loth to write, for more reasons than I can easily relate.

O Monseigneur Gilles, what sunlight of youthful days, what darkening shades of sad night, your name doth recall ! And how shall I paint you, whose very name at the end of so many years doth yet stir up my soul with thoughts more bitter than sweet, and yet with

some kind of sweetness in them ! for since the days when I played with you at Havering Bower, when I was your grandam's little damsel, and 'you a merry princely wight, and a sore trouble to her ladies through your wantonness and mischiefs, I had a humble and tender, not worldly or ambitious, love for you, which made me think it an honour to sit and watch your sports, and listen to your tales of the court and the King, whose playfellow you then were, as since his friend. You had always a spirit, which neither Lord Warwick's severity nor the Queen your grandam's frowns could subdue ; no, nor yet later, the prospect of death itself, as I shall hereafter describe. It would have been better for me, I ween, not to have known you, my prince ; my life should have been a different one if we had never met. But God knoweth. It may be that what is for some a cause of lightness worked in me, contrariwise, a gravity beyond my years, and a marked indifferency to the vanities of the world. An affection which soareth high, and for that reason meeteth with no return, must needs, I think, either disgrace or exalt her who doth entertain it ; for if she is not modest,



and her behaviour is light, it is a shame to her womanhood ; but if she concealeth it in her heart, and feel it only by prayers said in secret for one she loves, and would be contented to see happy if she should be herself ever so miserable, then the pent-up tenderness, like an ascending flame, consumes the gross and more selfish materials whereof it is composed, and purifies the heart wherein it dwells. But how now, my pen ! whither art thou straying ? I gave thee license to chronicle the doings of others, not the seely dreams of thine own by-gone days. Return to thy duty, or I will cast thee aside for ever.

When the door of the hall opened, after all the confusion without, Lady de Scales came in with the Prince Gilles de Bretagne, whose dripping-wet attire and the broken feather in his bonnet betokened a hard ride through wind and rain.

“The Queen hath landed,” her ladyship announced. “Monseigneur bringeth the tidings.”

“Long live the King !—long live the Queen !” we all cried out with one heart and one voice.

Lady Ann de la Pole, filial love conquering natural timidity, ran forward towards the Prince, and said, "Ah, Monseigneur! are my dear parents also landed?"

"Fair damoiselle," he replied, smiling, "I am no sorcerer. How can I then divine who should be the happy wights who call you daughter?"

"This is the Lady Ann de la Pole," said Lady de Scales. "Lord and Lady Suffolk are her parents."

"I crave your pardon, Lady Ann," replied Monseigneur Gilles. "The great earl and his lady are arrived. It was my Lord Suffolk which carried the Queen in his arms from the boat to the shore, amidst the rough dashing waves. Heavens! how it did blow and rain, as if twenty thousand devils raised a storm to drive one angel away! Despite the lightnings and the rain, the good men of Porchester stood lining the shore, and roared out, louder than the thunder, welcomes to Madame. O, this Queen is a pearl of matchless beauty—a very phantom of delight! Pardon, fair ladies, if, in the presence of so much loveliness, I call any other beauty matchless; but your loyalty

will not deny that title to this sovereign lady when you see her. I would you had all beheld her when she first set her foot, the smallest nature could frame, on English ground. Though pale and cold as a stone image, she raised her head with so noble an aspect, and smiling on the crowd, did bear herself in so right royal and gracious a fashion, that all the people shouted, 'A Queen! a Queen!' Verily, her eyes are globes of living light, fit to set the world on fire! And now, fair damoiselles, that I have paid you this my brief devoir, and cheered you by this good news, I must bid you farewell, and commend myself to your prayers. For neither mine horse nor I shall rest until we reach Southwicke. By Sainte Anne d'Auray, I would as soon never set eyes on a lady again, as fail to be the first to tell the King of the Queen's landing, and hear him say, 'Gramercy for these joyful tidings, my fair cousin!' and then see him raise his comely eyes to heaven, with the God-thanking look which doth become him so well."

So saying, Monseigneur took his leave; but noticing me as he went out, he doffed his bonnet with great courtesy, and kissed his

hand as to a friend. I often think of the lines which the Trouvère Marie wrote of the Comte de Longue Epée, the son of the Fair Rosamond, whose bower was not fairer in her eyes than that of Havering in mine :

“ Pour amour du Comte Guillaume,  
Le plus vaillant du royaume,  
Qui fleur est de chevalerie,  
D'enseignement et de courtoisie,  
M'entrepris ce livre faire.”

And so I too write a book. Howsoever, not with the same intent as this Trouvère ; for the love which possessed my heart was not of the same sort as hers, and hath been now a long time buried in a cold grave beyond the seas.

## CHAPTER II.

### WHAT THE MAIDS OF HONOUR THOUGHT OF THE QUEEN.

WHEN the prince was gone, the Queen's household hurried to the cloisters, and stood there to wait her coming, which was not till two hours later. Cries of "La Royme! la Royme!" were heard without from the officers of the guard; and then she entered the walls of the Goddeshouse, led by my Lord Suffolk, and followed by her suite. Then was my first sight of this great queen; and as each knee was bent as she passed by, so gracious was her smile and the cognisance she took of the homage paid to her, that nothing, methought, could exceed the gracefulness of her carriage.

"Gramercy, mesdames," and the like pretty French words, uttered in a dulcet voice, which made them sound like music, ravished the hearers. Weariness from long

travel had driven the roses from her cheeks ; but every feature of her matchless visage was perfect, and her eyes more beautiful than any eyes I ever beheld. She went into her lodgings with her ladies, where she dressed, and refreshments were carried to her. Then, after supper, we were summoned to attend her majesty to the church, whither she went to give thanks and make an offering.

On the morrow the Queen and all her household were rowed in great state to Southampton. The sun, which had been churlish on the previous day, hiding his face behind the clouds, now, like unto a gracious monarch, gladdened the sea and land with his shining. The wind, his vassal, lowered his boisterous voice in that royal presence ; and the waves, unchafed by rude stirrings, grew gentle also, and played like sportive lambs about the vessel's side. Many thousand persons stood on the shore ; and little boats darted to and fro, like gleesome sea-birds, between the land and the barge in which we were. Sounds of shouting from the crowd of spectators came wafted on the breeze ; and lovely was the sheen of the Queen's eyes as she gazed on the

coast, which verily seemed alive with welcomes.

I heard her say to Lord Suffolk, "I perceive that your English sky, my lord, though not so brilliant as that of Naples or Provence, can be of a very soft and lovely blue. Yesterday it seemed as if the inhabitants of the infernal regions had been let loose to impede my landing. I think I was the Jonas of the Cocklejohn; for verily, as soon as you had carried me ashore, the storm abated. O, what a *Deo gratias* I uttered when my feet touched the ground at last!"

"Not a more fervent one, I'll warrant it, madame, than did your poor servant," answered the earl. "And yet there is a sadness in the discharge of these my last offices of duty to your majesty."

"Ah! believe me, good my lord," the Queen exclaimed, "Marguerite, the queen of England, shall never forget the good services of Lord Suffolk to Marguerite d'Anjou."

Then she bade the earl present to her his daughter, and with many fair speeches and bright smiles she greeted the Lady Ann. One by one she learned the names of all her

ladies and damsels. When my turn came, she pleasantly said, "Then we are both daisies, for so, I think, you call marguerites in English."

When Mistress Woodville approached, she whispered to the earl,

"A very fair flower this, my lord. Is she not a true English beauty?"

"Not wholly English, madame," he replied. "The Duchess of Bedford is her mother."

"O, the beautiful Jacquette, of Flanders!" she answered, smiling.

And so, questioning of their lineage and studying their visages, she passed her household in review.

As we rowed past the Italian galleys moored at the mouth of the river, harmonious sounds of most sweet music came floating on the breeze. The Queen quickly asked whence they proceeded; and when she heard it was from the Genoese ships, a look of pleasure lighted up her face.

"God prosper the merchant princes!" she exclaimed. "They and their doge, the good Fregosi, have ever been true friends to the house of Anjou."



Then, as her eyes wandered along the coast, she said to Lord Suffolk, "Where are the white cliffs of Albion, my lord, which Alain Chartier speaks of in his description of England? I have seen naught but a smooth shore since we left Portsmouth."

The earl replied, "They are found on the coast more to the east, madame, nigh unto the port of Dover, the nearest point to France, whence they may be at times discerned."

"Nay, nay, my lord," she answered pleasantly. "I think rather that you are an enchanter, and by a rare stroke of witchcraft do make that appear smooth to mine eyes which nature created rugged."

"Fain would I always have so good a power, madame," quoth the earl. "And I pray God your majesty may never meet in this land with aught less smiling than these fair shores and still waters."

Thus discoursing with her noble guide and her ladies, the Queen whiled away the time, and when we landed rode through the town to the Goddeshouse, amidst the cheerings of the crowd.

We tarried some time in this hospital at

Southampton, to the no small discontent of the Queen's household. It was bruited about that the delay was caused by her majesty's lack of apparel—her gear was so mean and scanty, that it did not befit a queen to put it on. Lady Suffolk would have it that the packages which held her clothes had been lost on board the ship, but others reported that King René was too poor to furnish his daughter with royal habiliments; and this caused impertinent language to be held amongst some of the attendants, which it misliked me to hear. Howsoever, Lady Suffolk resolved to send to London one John Pole, with three horses, for to fetch thence Margaret Chamberlayne, a renowned tirewoman in the city, to make gowns for the Queen. She gave him one pound for his expenses, and bade him ride fast, and lose no time on the way. I saw some of the letters which this messenger carried from the maids of honour to their friends in London. Like unthinking wenches, they suffered others to read what they wrote, so that they enjoyed the like privilege in their turn. This was Mistress Woodville's letter to her mother :

*“ To my right worshipful Mother, her Grace the Duchess of Bedford.*

“ MADAME,—I, your grace’s humble daughter and servant, commend myself to your goodness, and crave your grace’s blessing. The Queen came to Portsmouth three days ago, and now we are at Southampton. She is very fair spoken, and hath showed me great favour, though I am the youngest of her maids except little Winefred Wenlock. She inquired of your grace’s health, with many tokens of her good will, and much hopeth to see you soon. Her majesty cannot yet travel, by reason of her gear, which is lost, albeit some declare she never had any fit for her to wear; not so much as one gown well trimmed or costly, such as your grace hath in your wardrobe. The people at Portsmouth and here did very much shout at her landing, and greeted her heartily. She doth not speak much English yet. In the barge which brought us here she conversed all the time in French with Lord Suffolk. She holds her head very high, and looks older than fifteen. But as regardeth beauty, your grace, in my poor judgment, doth as much surpass the Queen as a full-blown rose exceedeth a

pale bud.—Your grace's loving daughter and servant to command,

“ELIZABETH WOODVILLE.”

Then Mary Beaumont wrote as followeth to Mistress Alice Botley, which was his majesty's nurse and her own kinswoman :

“MY WELL-BELOVED MISTRESS ALICE,—I would have you to know as soon as I can tell you of it of the Queen's coming, for methinks your very great love of the king's majesty shall make you impatient for these tidings. Her highness landed the day before yesterday. She is a most fair and winsome lady, with so noble a carriage and gracious behaviour that the world cannot, I think, have seen her like since the days when the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon. Sith his majesty was so well pleased, as is reported, with her picture, the sight of her real beauty must needs make him the most contented person in the whole world. It is said we are to tarry eight days in this town, owing to the Queen's lack of fine gear. In my poor thinking, the meanest gown that could be seen would borrow so great a lustre from her

majesty's wearing of it, that none would mark its defects. But my Lady Suffolk is resolved that her grace shall not travel till Mrs. Chamberlayne hath made her clothes most rich, and, as she says, befitting her present greatness. The Holy Trinity have you in His keeping, dear Mistress Alice; so prayeth your loving friend and kinswoman, MARY BEAUMONT."

Lady Isabel Butler wrote to her brother, Lord Ormond, this letter, which she showed in secret to Mistress Daubeny, who treacherously, when her ladyship was called out of the parlour, read it aloud to the other ladies :

"MY WORSHIPFUL BROTHER,—I hope your poor sister's writing shall be more welcome to your lordship at this time than it hath been afore now. For I remember your malicious speech touching ladies' letters, the bad writing of which you declared to yield more trouble to the reader than the contents were worth; which I take to be high treason against womanhood, and what none of our sex should forgive. But, lo, now the Queen is come, and

you, with all the gaping world, are, I doubt not, asking, 'Is she fair or foul? black or white? curt or kind? merry or sad?' And none can tell you, except such as are shut up with her majesty in this Goddeshouse, which is the worst house I have slept in, and in my thinking should be aptly styled the devil's house, if truth should be spoken, it is so dark and uncleanly. Well, then, shall a woman's letter be worth the reading now, I pray you, if it be ever so ill written with the worst pen in the world, and no time to think of any right spelling? Ah, my good lord, methinks I see you stroke your chin, caress your beard, and sniff the air like unto a snorting palfrey, the while you cry out, 'A plague on that shrewish Bella! Why cannot the foolish wench write her tidings, and forbear from teasing?' Ah, sweet lord, how can a woman abstain from teasing, when so rare a privilege cometh in her way as the withholding of news which manly curiosity pineth to learn? But, come, I will be merciful, and in a few words portray this paragon, this pearl, which the French do brag of as if the world had not her like. Well, she is a black pearl. Men say such are the

most costly. This should be true, for she hath cost us Maine and Anjou. She hath eyes which will, I promise you, set the world on fire. 'How so?' you ask. 'Marry, sir, read me that riddle. Let it be with love, if it please you; with hate, if you like it. But I pray you now, will fire and water agree together? Methinks water will quench fire, or else fire dry up water.' 'Is she fair?' you demand. Yea, passing fair, if the lightning is fair. 'Is she queen-like?' Yea, more than queen-like—king-like, I mean, and yet a woman, for she can weep, by the same token that her tears fell like rain on the cushion when she was making her offering in church after her landing. But, I pray you, what a wife for a king is this, that hath neither lands or gold, yea not one silver penny for her dower, or so much as a gown to her back, and must needs be clothed by her good man, like the fair Grisel in Master Chaucer's tales! But I warrant you this shall be no patient Grisel, if the flash of her black eye, and the curl of her lip, and the sweep of her carriage belie her not. Fare ye well, good my lord and sweet brother.

“Written in haste at the Goddeshouse, Southampton, on the 12th day of April.

“ISABEL BUTLER.”

Before the tirewoman had arrived the Queen fell sick. The first day she fought against the malady, and would not see a leech; but on the morrow<sup>1</sup> she was very much disordered, and could not raise her head one whit. The report was spread that she had caught the small-pox, and most of her ladies were afraid to go near her chamber, so great was their terror of this disease, which threatens life and beauty. Some forthwith craved license to depart; others withdrew to another part of the building. Lady Suffolk wisely ordered the departure of such as were most affrighted, and shut herself up with the Queen. Lady de Scales, who knew I had no home at that time, by reason of my father being engaged in his majesty's service in France, wished me to go to the convent at Winchester with Mary Beaumont, whose aunt was the abbess of that house. I prayed her to intercede for me with Lady Suffolk, that I might remain with the Queen, for I had been diseased with the small-pox two years before,



and had no fear of contracting it again, howsoever close should be my attendance on her majesty, the meanest offices in whose chamber I should be contented to perform. Shortly afterwards Lady Suffolk sent for me, and with a pleased countenance received me at the door of the Queen's lodgings.

"If it be true, Lady Margaret," she said, "that you have had the small-pox, and are not afraid of contracting it, then, in God's name, remain with us, and your service shall be welcome. When her majesty is able to sit up, it should be a cheering thing to her to have the company of one of her own age."

So saying she led me into the sick chamber, which was poor and meanly furnished for so great a guest.

## CHAPTER III.

### A CONVERSATION.

FOR some days the Queen continued very sick ; but her disease proved, howsoever, light of its sort, and she mended quickly. The time of recovery oftentimes needs more patience than that of sickness. We began to discern that this was not her majesty's chiefest virtue, and the little of it she possessed was sorely tried. The long delay she foresaw to her meeting with the King, who, when he had notice of the malady of his dear and best-beloved wife, was almost beside himself with grief and fear ; the apprehension lest her face should suffer, and seem less fair to him when he should see it, than her picture ; the sad aspect of her lodgings, the soreness in her limbs, and frequent pain in the head she suffered,—made her often sad and not a little impatient. One day, at last, I found her in better cheer, and inclined to talk. She was sitting in an armed chair by the closed window, with a cushion to rest her head, and

held tablets in her hand on which she had been writing. As I could speak French with ease, it pleased her grace to converse with me : and on that morning she thus began :

“ Madame de Roos, truth, poets say, lives at the bottom of a well, but I will not credit that it is not found elsewhere also. I think I see it in your eyes ; so now, I pray you, tell me the truth, the naked truth, as clothesless as if it came out of a well. Is my face very sorely changed since first you saw it ? My tiring-glass is broken, and Madame de Suffolk will not procure me another.”

“ Your majesty’s visage,” I replied, “ hath sundry red blotches on it, and your features are somewhat swollen ; but it hath no holes or seams in it which should produce any lasting disfigurement.”

“ Think you so ?” her grace answered musingly. “ Madame de Suffolk showed me yesterday a letter she had written to the King. I could scarce keep from smiling at the similes it contained. She said my face was beautiful, like the moon, which hath also spots in it.”

“ Her ladyship,” I said, “ is the granddaughter of Master Geoffrey Chaucer, and hath,

I doubt not, inherited his poetic genius. But, madame, I speak only the truth when I say that your majesty need not fear to have lost your beauty. I would not flatter even a queen; but God hath bestowed upon you so much of it that even temporary disadvantages cannot greatly mar the perfect gifts of nature."

Her grace smiled, as one used to hear such commendations of her loveliness; not so much with a vain complacency as a kind of indifference, resulting from the assured possession of attractions which others covet with solicitude. She then asked me how I had learned to speak French with so great fluency, and I answered:

"At the court of the queen Joan, the King's grandam, madame. I was there brought up with French gentlewomen, and acquired their language; but report declares that your majesty converses with ease in five diverse languages."

"Five?" her grace replied. "Nay, four—Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish; ay, and in mine own dear Provençal tongue also—the language of poesy and love, whose flowing accents glide from the lips like a stream of bewitching music."

"I have heard it said," I rejoined, "that this dialect is so soft and melodious, that none but singers should use it."

"Or poets," her majesty quickly added—"the singers of the soul."

"I fear, madame, your ears being so accustomed to those harmonious languages, that the rough accents of our English tongue must needs very much offend them."

"Ah," she said, with a smile, "English speaking is rough, but withal strong, and, I doubt not, a meet channel for the utterance of deep thought. I mislike it not. The sea on these northern coasts is likewise ruder and more boisterous than at Naples, or on the shores of Provence; but it hath a nobler aspect and more of grandeur in it, which pleaseth me."

"The waves gave your majesty a rude welcome to this shore."

"Ah, envious spirits—jealous of my great fortunes—raised, I think, a storm to drive me from England, and having failed in that intent sent this malicious disease to mar my visage and delay my joy!"

"Methinks, madame," I replied, in a grave

manner, "it was rather God our Lord, who, knowing your majesty to be possessed of more rare gifts in yourself, and of more love and admiration and praise from others, and in greater renown of beauty, genius, and wit than any other princess in the world, ordained these accidents as His ministers to ask back at your hands for one moment His own bestowings, even as a sovereign demands from a vassal the lands he holds from him, which, when he hath done homage for them, he straightway restores to him."

"Ah, my good Miladi de Roos," the Queen cried, laughing, "that speech savours somewhat of the great order of St. Dominic, the friars preachers. But, believe me, you will please me very much if you love God and are devout, for then you shall pray for me, who have great need of it; and I mislike not sermons if they are short and pithy, and delivered in good language; but romances and plays, and all the lore of the gai savoir, is my chief delight. My lord the King is much taken up with praying, I hear?"

"Madame, his majesty is reported to be exceedingly religious, and so virtuous in all

his actions, that since the days of King Edward the Confessor so pious a monarch hath not reigned in England."

"The English are a very grave people. I sometimes fear that the gay spirits, which in mine own country I thought not to restrain, may beget in their eyes a suspicion of light behaviour."

"The English, madame, have seen so many French princesses of great virtue married to their kings, that they must needs honour the ladies of France."

"Ay, there was my aunt Isabel, who died before I was born, but her memory will be as long as her life was short; it lives in the poems of her last husband, Charles d'Orleans. The first verses, I think, I ever read were those which begin, '*J'ai fait l'obsèque de madame.*' Why do you smile, Miladi de Roos?"

Thus questioned, I told her majesty that I had done into English that fair piece of poetry.

"Ah!" cried her grace, "do you then possess the book of Duke Charles' writings?"

"No, madame," I replied. "I learnt these

verses by heart some years ago, from hearing Monseigneur Gilles de Bretagne repeat them."

"What!" the Queen exclaimed, "is that fair young prince, who greeted me on my landing, a lover of the gai savoir? But let me hear in English my favourite lay. Nay, do not blush so deeply to own yourself a member of the confraternity of which the Muses are the patron saints."

I doubt not that I blushed, as her majesty said, but not for the reason she supposed. Howsoever, I recited at her bidding this piece of poetry.

"To make my lady's obsequies, my love a minster wrought,  
And in the chauntry service there was sung by doleful  
thought ;

The tapers were of burning sighs that life and odour gave,  
And grief illumined by tears irradiated her grave ;

And round about in quaintest guise  
Was carved, ' Within this tomb there lies  
The fairest thing to mortal eyes.'

Above her lieth spread a tomb, of gold and sapphire blue ;  
The gold doth show her blessedness, the sapphires mark  
her true.

For blessedness and truth in her were lively portrayed,  
When gracious God with both His hands her wondrous  
beauty made.

She was, to speak without disguise,  
The fairest thing to mortal eyes.



No more, no more my heart doth faint, when I the life re-  
call

Of her who lived so free from taint, so virtuous deemed by  
all;

Who in herself was so complete, I think that she was ta'en  
By God to deck His paradise, and with His saints to reign,  
Whom while on earth each one did prize  
The fairest thing to mortal eyes."<sup>o</sup>

"Good! very good!" cried her majesty, clapping her hands. "I thank the saints that I have found among my ladies a no mean trouble, whose ingenious talent, in this instance exercised on a sorrowful theme, is able also, I doubt not, to smile as well as mourn in harmonious verse; one who can read and write as well as spin. There is something in your visage and grave carriage—nay, do not laugh—which calls to my mind my sister Yolande. I should like to make you my secretary, Miladi de Roos."

"Ah, madame," I exclaimed, "that would be too great an honour for your poor servant. But Lady Isabel Butler is, I fear, named to that office."

"What! that long-necked damsel, whose obeisance hath in it more of defiance than of

<sup>o</sup> This translation is from the pen of Mr. Carey.

homage? From such a one *libera nos, Domine*. But I will then create an office for you, Miladi de Roos. You shall be the keeper of the queen's journal." As she said this her majesty took up the tablets she had been writing on, and held them in her hand. "But more of that anon," she added. "Now let us return to the French queens, my predecessors. 'The fairest thing to mortal eyes' you were not worthy of, for England slew her lord, King Richard, and cast her back penniless on her native shore."

"Pardon me, madame; King Henry the Fourth would fain have worn that fair lily in his bosom, or have decked his son's crown with it."

"Yea, yea," retorted her majesty, laughing; "but the lily would not be handed from one English king to another. She was younger by one year than I am now—only fourteen; but was yet old enough to be firmly resolved against such a marriage. I think the women of our lineage have stronger wills than the men. But France gave you another of its royal flowers,—my other aunt, Queen Katharine, my lord the King's mother."

"Yea," I replied, "and also his majesty's grandmother, Jeanne la Bonne, as the Bretons called her."


"Ah, Jeanne de Navarre ! Well, Miladi de Roos, if not *la mauvaise*, like her brother, I doubt her being quite *la bonne*."

"Madame, that queen had a thousand great and noble qualities, which slander strove to hide."

"Did she not deal a little with the devil, to destroy her stepson ?"

"Nay, nay, madame," I cried, most pained and angry that so great a falsehood should have been reported to the Queen ; "that was a false calumny, invented by her enemies."

"Lord Suffolk told me that the day Queen Johanna died all the lions in the Tower died also ; 'the which,' he added, 'was naught seen the like in no man's time before ; and that this was set down in the Chronicle of London ;' which made me laugh. I think a lion should have been born in England the day I landed, for the cognisance of our house is a lion. One is always maintained at the king my father's expense at Arles ; and I have often heard him describe a fierce combat which took place be-



tween this his pensioner and other wild beasts which entered the lists with him. But, I pray you, is it true that the queen's mother, my aunt Katharine the fair, wedded in a secret manner, after her husband's death, a poor knight of mean birth, and had children by that marriage? One of the English ladies which came to Nancy told me this."

I assured her majesty this was well known to be true, and that the gentleman was Owen Tudor, a Welsh esquire of no mean extraction, but yet not one which should have dared so much as to think on marrying the daughter, widow, and mother of a king. I added, that some time before she died the Duke of Gloucester took from her her children, and gave them into the keeping of Lord Suffolk's sister, the Abbess of Barking, and that this separation, it was said, had shortened the queen's life.

"I blush for my kinswoman," the Queen exclaimed. "How could a queen so debase herself as to become a wife and a mother by stealth? Shame on Katharine of Valois! Would she had been no kin or kith of mine! If nobility hath its obligations, which a French

saying declares, how much more so should royalty constrain a woman to scorn the weakness of amorous follies !”

Then she fixed her eyes on a portrait of the King which was affixed to the wall, and asked me if it was like, and if his majesty’s visage was as beautiful as this picture showed it to be, and as had been reported to her.

“His countenance, madame,” I replied, “hath almost a heavenly beauty, and every feature is as perfect as if a cunning imager had framed it.”

She mused a little, smiled, then said, “I will make him love me.”

“Ah, madame,” I cried, kneeling down at her feet, for I dared not caress her except by an act of homage, “that will be no hard matter, I promise you, to make him, which should be most inclined to it, do that which those most reluctant thereunto could with difficulty keep from.”

“What, then, you think it should be an easy matter to love me, petite Marguerite,” she said, the while with her small hand she stroked my cheek. “Then you shall be my friend.”

"Your loving servant, madame," I cried, passionately kissing her hand. When I did so some tears fell from her eyes upon it. "Ah, my liege lady," I could not refrain from saying, "'tis hard to leave a father's house and the old loves of childhood for new and untried affections."

"Even in my cradle," she replied, "I learnt that the world is full of changes and partings. The first thing I can remember is my mother's catching me up in her arms at Nancy, and the terrible cry she gave when the news came of the loss of the battle of Bulgneville, and then her frantic queries, 'Alas, where is René? where is my lord? He is ta'en; he is slain!' She would not be persuaded he was yet alive, till Théophanie, who had been my father's nurse and was then mine, swore to her on the cross that he was a prisoner. 'Then all is not lost,' she cried, falling on her knees, Yolande and my brothers clinging to her, and returned fervent thanks. From that day I can call to mind almost all which befell us. The brain expands more quickly, I think, in some children than in others; and the apprehension of important

matters awakens observation, and works an early ripeness which forestalls age. Soon after that great mishap my mother went to my uncle, the King of France, to crave his protection, and that he should deal with the Duke of Burgundy, whose prisoner my father was. She carried me in her arms, and my sister and my brothers followed, holding her robe.

“ Ah, Miladi de Roos, it hath been said that on that day England lost France. The valiant sword of Jeanne la Pucelle would have been drawn in vain, perhaps, but for the eyes of Agnes Sorel, who was my mother’s maid of honour and with us on that day.”

“ Madame,” I replied, “ albeit Jeanne was the curse of England, and some have reputed her not to be free from the suspicion of witchcraft—”

The moment after I had uttered those words I was trembling like an aspen leaf, for the Queen’s eyes suddenly flashed with so great anger that I could not brook their aspect, and cast mine on the ground.

“ I pray your grace to forgive,” I falteringly said, “ an error bred in this country by

the natural resentments of a worsted nation. I did but mention the common credence amongst the English, which my poor thinking hath not shared."

"Nay, then, I commend rather than pardon you," quoth her majesty; "for to resist a current of false belief is more honourable than to float indifferently with the stream of a true one. Jeanne, in my grandam's thinking, and that of the most virtuous ladies in France, was as good as she was brave; and the sword of Charlemagne was not disgraced in her pure hands. My father fought by her side in many combats; and when counsels adverse to her prevailed at the French court, he befriended her cause, which was that of France. But may be," the Queen added, with a smile, "you think my warmth betrayeth an unseemly regard for France ill becoming an English queen."


"Nay, madame," I answered; "memory is more slow in changing sides than the heart. I ween yours is now wholly English."

Then I inquired of her majesty if the King of France had befriended the queen, her mother, in the straits she had described. She replied,



that the power, not the will, to do it had been wanting; and one who was born to command and reign was forced to sue in a like manner to her proud cousin Antoine de Vaudémont, who had robbed her of most of her inheritance and waged war on her lord. He could not choose but pity the royal lady at his feet, and consented to a truce.

“But what think you,” quoth the Queen, “were the conditions he extorted? Nothing less than that Yolande should marry his son Ferry, with the lands my parents yet held in Lorraine for her dower; and what I think was the most hard, nothing would satisfy him but that she should forthwith be sent to the countess, his wife, to be reared in their house. I was likewise at that time betrothed to Pierre de Luxembourg, the son of the Count de St. Pol, who cut down my father at Bulgneville. But by reason of my tender years I was not taken from my mother. Jean and Louis were sent as hostages to the Duke of Burgundy for the fulfilment of this hard treaty, which deprived my father of his lands, his pelf, and his dear children. The day when he came to Nancy from Dijon to meet and then to part



with three out of his four infants is one which even now I cannot think of without tears. When he saw me weeping in Yolande's arms, who was but five years old then and I not three, he laid his hand on my head, and said: 'Ah, petite creature, hath reason so soon appeared in thee, only to teach thee how to grieve!' Yolande hath told me that when she was taken to her mother-in-law, she should have died of sorrow, but that Ferry was brought to play with her. She would not take heed of him at first, which made him cry. Then she went to him, and wiped his eyes with her kerchief; and afterwards they always loved each other. My father could not then redeem his pledge to the Duke of Burgundy, and was forced to yield himself again a prisoner, and Jean stayed with him at the Tour de la Bar. Louis came back to us, and we both went with our mother to Provence."

Then the Queen closed her beautiful eyes, and either from fatigue of long speaking or the thoughts of early griefs working in her soul, she waxed for a few moments very pale.

"Well, my good Marguerite," the Queen said, after a time, "if you would know more

of my past life,—not a long one indeed, if years are counted, but seeming so from the strange and varied fortunes which have attended it,—I give you free license to read this book, of which I make you the keeper. It begins where my recital ended—when, my uncle Louis dying, my father, though a prisoner, became King of Provence, and soon afterwards of Naples. For the space of nine years I have written in it, not daily, nor yet every week or every month, but only when inclination, leisure, or increasing ease in the use of the pen moved me to it. I would not willingly part with these pages. Sometimes, when I have travelled, it has been my wont to send for a flower from a hedge or piece of turf, or even in Alpine regions from the snow alongside the road ; and these were, I often think, the fairest of all. I placed them in a book which hung at my saddle-bow. Albeit dry and withered now, they yet speak of the mountains, the fields, and the green valleys, where once they grew. And these poor buds of youthful thinking, preserved in parchment leaves, discourse also of the varied scenes which gave them birth. Take, then, this book

with you ; but let no other eyes but yours pry into its pages. The Queen's secrets are in your keeping, and I think I read in your eyes, sweet lady, the warrant of their safety."

I became that day the keeper of the Queen's journal.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DAWN.

HERE beginneth the Queen's Journal.

Tarascon in Provence, 1435.

I, Madame l'Infante d'Anjou, am six years old to-day. Messire Antoine de la Salle has given me this fair book, and painted that garland of daisies which you see in the first page, and my name, *Marguerite*, in fine blue and red letters and much gold. Monseigneur Louis is jealous; but when he writes as well as I do, then Messire Antoine will give him also a book, and instead of daisies he will paint for him a laurel wreath, which doth become a soldier. I wish I was a prince, for then when I was tall enough I should be knighted like Monseigneur Jean, who kept watch by the side of his arms all night at Dijon, though he is only three years older than I am. It would like me to put on armour and fight against the caitiff Duke of Burgundy, who keeps my father-king in prison. But as I cannot be a man, I

will be like Jeanne la Pucelle, and ride a fine white horse, and wear the sword of Charlemagne, and be called the Maid of Anjou. Of all the stories I have heard, none pleases me so well as that of Jeanne. I wish Monseigneur St. Michel would speak to me. But Théophanie never leaves me alone in the garden. I think that is the reason why angels do not talk to me.

When we go abroad here the people throw flowers on the road, and build green arches and fair bowers wherever we pass. This liketh me well, but yet more to hear them sing the lays of King René, my dear father. When they play on their instruments the "Sacre d'Angers," my heart beats in my breast like a little bird in its cage. The Provençals love us very much. They cry out that Louis and I are the most beautiful and excellent creatures in the whole world, and like unto God's angels in the sky. But Théophanie says they do not know how naughty Monseigneur and Madame are at home, and not at all like unto angels.

When we were on the terrace with the queen to-day a crowd came to look at us. I saw ugly faces which scared me. When

Agathe was undressing me she said that two witches had been caught, which sometimes turn into cats, and by means of a purse made out of a cat's skin work many devilries and charms, which cause lovers to hate each other and many dreadful things. They came from Hyères, and now they are taken to Aix, where the judges will cause them, she hopes, to be burnt alive.

Last night I could not sleep for thinking of those witches; so Théophanie came and sat by my bedside, and talked of my dear father and my aunt Marie, whom she took care of when they were little, as she now takes care of me.

“Ah, petite madame,” she said, “you must indeed be a very virtuous princess, for where can be found in one family so many great examples of piety as in your race? Your grandams, Madame Marguerite de Bâvière and Madame Yolande d'Arragon, are the most esteemed princesses in Europe, and every one calleth them saints. Your aunt Marie, my sweet nurseling, is a paragon of virtue. The late King Louis and his queen,

your great uncle Monseigneur de Bar, and your royal parents, have not their like in this age for nobility of soul and towardness in serving God."

"But I am too little to serve God," I answered.

Then Théophanie said,

"There is in Brittany a princess married to the Duke Pierre, your uncle Francis's brother, who, when she was but five years old, was called the little saint."

"What is her name?" I asked, for I liked to talk more than to sleep.

"Madame Françoise d'Amboise," she answered. "When she was only three years old she always said her prayers, and was never so happy as when in the church. One winter day after Mass her nurse, who was chafing her cold little feet, saw her shed tears. 'O good nurse,' she cried, 'didst thou not see my good patron Messire St. François in his chapel with his stone feet all cold and bare? Prithee, carry him my stockings to put on.' When she was five, the good duchess took her one day on her knees, and said, 'Sweetheart, what aileth thee, that thou dost often weep?'"



‘Madame,’ quoth the wise infant, ‘I see you and Monseigneur and all your court go to the altar, and the good Jesus comes into your hearts. I weep because He comes not to me.’ ‘Comfort thee, little Françoise,’ quoth the duchess. ‘If the Bishop hearkens to my prayer, on All Saints’ day the good Jesus shall also come to thee.’ And so it came about that at All Hallows Madame Françoise, albeit only five years of age, received the good God into her heart.”

“And how old is she now?” I asked.

“About twenty-five years of age,” said Théophanie.

“And hath she been good ever since?”

“Yea,” she said. “More good every day.”

“Then methinks she must be very tired now,” I cried; “for I am tired if I am good only one day.”

And then I fell asleep, for I had forgot about the witches.

I have been a little sick to-day, and could not go out. To pass the time, I had a pack of cards to play with. I spread them all on the table, and made armies of them. Barbe told

me those with faces are portraits. The queen with the shamrocks is my aunt Marie ; the one with hearts the late Queen Isabel ; she with the lance the Pucelle Jeanne ; and the other with the squares Agnes Sorel. I marvel she should be one of them. She is no queen, nor yet a brave soldier like Jeanne. The kings, Barbe said, were King Charles, and the King of England, who is dead, and the King of Spain, I think, and Monseigneur de Bourgogne, whom I hate. I tore that card into little bits, which Barbe thought was a pity. I like the knaves. They are Messire la Hire, and Dunois, and Hector de Galard, and the brave Barbazon, who died at Bulgneville.


To-night they have kindled great fires before the castle gate. Louis thought they were bonfires, and clapped his hands for joy. It was like the Eve of St. John, and Agathe hoped it would drive away all witches and fairies ; but Messire Antoine told me it was done to chase the plague from us—the black death, which killeth many persons in the town.

They have lighted fires every night, but

the black death will not cease. We are going to Marseilles in a few days, and then in a ship across the sea to my father's new kingdom in Italy. The good Provençals have given my mother soldiers, who will fight for us against the Spaniards. Farewell, sweet Provence, where every one loves us so well. Farewell, blue river Rhone, which will carry us swiftly to the sea, and then we shall see you no more. Farewell, Yolande; farewell, Monseigneur Jean de Calabre. I wish I was like you, in prison with my father. I wish I was a blossom on a branch near to his window. I wish the wind would blow me through the bars into his arms. . . . O, I am tired of wishing and of writing.

Messire Marie de St. André hath been this day portraying the castle for a love-token from my mother to my father. He hath made it so like to what we see, that he will have, methinks, much contentment in this piece of painting. The queen stood a long time looking on it, and then she said,

“ Ah, Messire André, my lord will recompense you for this work. He hath a great



heart toward skilled persons such as you, and is no mean limner himself."

Then they talked of the chapel which shall be built here underground, and the fair terrace above the river to be added to the battlements. When the queen was gone, Messire Antoine said to the painter,

"My master's passion for your art is so great, that even the news of his advent to a new kingdom did not suffice to make him lay down his brush."

"How so?" quoth Messire Marie; and M. Antoine replied,

"The Sieur Vidal Cabanis came from Naples with those tidings, and found his majesty portraying our Lady's image on glass, who never so much as looked up or stopped to say, 'Why or wherefore are you come?' The envoy, weary of waiting, said, 'Monseigneur, God hath called to Himself your sister-in-law Queen Joan, who hath made you her heir.' 'God rest her soul!' quoth the king, and crossed himself. Then straightway took up his brush again, which angered the envoy, who was constrained to force his majesty to listen to the message by which the crown of Naples was tendered to him."

I admire that my father likes to paint more than to hear of a kingdom. It would please me to be told I should be a queen.

Marseilles, April 21st.

The sea is as blue as the Rhone, and so wide that it should be most like God, I think, of any thing else in the world, for it hath no beginning and no end that I can see. We have been to pray to our Lady of La Garde, at a chapel on a hill. When we were there, I saw the galleys which are to take us to Naples. Théophanie is not afraid now to cross the sea, since we have made a vow to our Lady. I have promised to give my little silver harp to buy bread for the poor, if we reach Naples in safety.

Capua, May 5th.

I think this land is Paradise. The people love us, if possible, yet more than those of Provence. No sooner did they see the ship than they came in boats, waving flags and crying "Evviva !" They carried us through the streets in a great chair like unto a throne, and a canopy of gold and red velvet over our heads. Wherever we passed, the shouts were

so loud that it seemed as if they could be heard in the skies. Gold and silver cloths and pieces of tapestry, with imaged figures, hung from all the windows. The great street, which is called the Via di Toledo, was decked with flowers, and the bells of all the churches rung. Shots were fired, which frightened us at first, though I would not show it, but I looked at Messire Antoine, and he whispered to me it was a token of joy in this country to fire little guns. The Count de Nola and sixteen lords complimented the queen. I counted them whilst he made his speech. She answered them in Italian, and then they cried "Evviva" again. Louis laughed at the men which ran screaming by our side. He took from the queen her nosegay, and threw flowers to them, which they caught in their hands and pressed to their hearts. It liketh me well to be the daughter of a king. I will not marry a count, or a duke, no, nor any one but a king. Agathe says I was promised to Pierre de Luxembourg, and that he should have been a fitting husband for me when my father was Duke of Lorraine, but not now when he is the King of Naples. I will not wed him, and be only the Countess

of St. Pol. I am too tired to write any more.

I fell asleep last night with my pen in my hand, and woke up crying "Evviva."

June 15th.

The black death, which was at Tarascon, is now at Naples ; I hope it will not come to Capua, for I do not want to die, but to live in this fine palace, of which all the walls are painted, so that we need no other pastime but to look at them. The gardens are full of figures of beasts and birds, and sometimes persons, which appear all of a sudden ; and if you set your foot in one place, a fountain springeth up and sprinkles you with perfume. It should seem as if fairies lived in these green alleys, and played us tricks. But Queen Joan was the fairy which made this palace. I asked Barbe if she was good. "Good insomuch, madame," she answered, "that she left this kingdom to your royal father." Théophanie sighed when I spoke of the good Queen Joan. She sighs often now, and is not so merry as in France. I wonder she can be sad here, where

each day is like a festival, and the sun always shines.


Last night, when Agathe was combing my hair, she said, "Ah! how well a crown will become this lovely head!" I asked her which king I should marry. "O, well-a-day!" she replied, "report says that the king your father shall soon be set free, and that the Duke of Burgundy, if he releases him, will have madame to wed her cousin the King of England." I snatched my hair out of her hands, and cried in great anger, "I will not be the Queen of England—no, not if the Duke of Burgundy should cut my head off." "And wherefore not?" said Agathe, laughing; "the English king is reported to be already more handsome than any other prince in Europe, and so puissant a monarch that his wife shall be the greatest queen on the earth."

I care not for what Agathe says. I hate the English, who burnt to death the brave Pucelle. I would kill every one of them if I could. I would crush them with my foot, as I did the wasp which stung Louis to-day. I



would tie the Duke of Bedford to a post, and burn him to death, as he burnt Jeanne. She was not a witch, and he is, I am sure, a wicked devil.

I looked at the map this morning, to see if England is as large as France or Spain. It is smaller than France, but bigger than Lorraine or Provence, or even Naples, I think. Agathe told Théophanie, and Théophanie told the queen, that I said I would not marry the King of England ; upon which she commanded her to chastise me, because it is not seemly for a princess to speak of marriage, and to say she will or will not marry any prince. Her parents do choose her a husband, and she hath only to obey. I loathe to be chastised, not for the pain, but the shame of it. Alizon, who was maid to Queen Katharine in England, says that when King Henry was a child he was made to sign a warrant for his nurse, and afterwards for his governor, to whip him, or it should have been high treason to lay hands on his majesty. If I had been in his place, they should never have had that warrant from me.



I do not often write in this book now, for I learn Italian and Latin, and read all the books I can. I heard yesterday Jean Manget, one of my brother's tutors, say to the Count of Nicastro, who was commending my face, "Ah, signore! Madame Marguerite hath all her father's wit and ingenuity, and her mother's strength of will. This young princess's praise goeth beyond the reach of my describing. In her eighth year she hath more learning and reflection, and a greater aptness in conversing, than most women at fifteen. Her beauty, which you praise, is the worse half of her merit." Well, sith God hath given me beauty and wit, I will acquire knowledge, which will teach me to use them. I will be the most excellent princess in the world, and famed for it at an age when others are content with playthings. I have thrown all mine into the sea. One fair doll I would fain have kept, but I kissed her once, and then cast her away, for I have resolved that books and the gittern and limning shall be my only pleasures now.


## CHAPTER V.

### THE EARLY MORN.

Naples, 1436.

Six months have passed away since that last page was written. The child Marguerite is no more. Like the little worm which turneth into a butterfly, she is now changed into a young princess, not yet very tall, but wise for her years. She cares not now for toys, nor much for sweetmeats. She studies with her brother's tutors, and is much commended by them for diligence and quickness in learning.


This day I went with the ladies of the court, Enrico d'Auna the seneschal, and Messire Antoine, to see the paintings on the walls of the church of Santa Chiara, which were designed by one Giotto, whose real name was Angiolotto, which did become him well; for those who by their thinking and their hands



do work the fairest things on earth must, I think, most resemble the angels in heaven. Messire Antoine told us the designs in that church were wrought by the hand of this great painter, who was once a little shepherd boy, and with chalk drew so cunningly on a stone the likeness of one of his sheep, that Master Cimabue, when he saw it in a lone place in the Apennines, carried him to Florence, to teach him to paint. But it was Dante Alighieri, Giotto's friend, and the greatest poet the world hath seen, who imagined what the other wrought. Messire Antoine will not suffer me yet to read the Divine Comedy. "When madame is older," he says; which displeases me, for it takes a long time to grow old. To pacify me, as we walked in the convent garden, he told me this little tale:

"Madame must know," he said, "that in Florence they have a pretty custom of keeping a festival in honour of the Spring. On the first of May the citizens assemble their friends, and entertain them in their houses. One Folco Portinari, about one hundred years ago, invited all his acquaintances to his villa, and

among the rest, Signor Alighieri, who carried thither his little son, Durante, for briefness called Dante, who was then only nine years old. There were many girls and boys at play under the trees, and after he had feasted at one of the tables on such dainties as befitted his age, he joined in their sports. Amongst that crowd of children was Folco's little daughter, Beatrice, a maiden of eight years. Her fairness and her heavenly modesty were so great that none could look on her without wonder. In her speech and her behaviour there was a wisdom, gravity, and suavity beyond her age. Each of her features was perfect in itself, and an incomparable harmony reigned in her face, so that she was thought by some to be an angel. The little boy, who was one day to be the great poet, saw her in the midst of her companions, and though he was so young, and she also, he loved her from that time, and loved her for ever after. In a few days he met her walking between two other maidens in a lane, dressed all in white. He was afraid to speak to her ; but she smiled in so holy and courteous a wise, and her looks and her words were so sweet,



that he went and shut himself in a room to think of her, and, falling asleep, he had a beautiful vision."

"What vision?" I asked.

M. Antoine smiled, and did not answer. Then I said:

"Was Beatrice a real maiden, or is this little tale an allegory?"

"Ah! madame," he replied, "some do maintain that the Beatrice which the poet writes of in his great poem is Folco's daughter, who died young; but others, that she is only a name for Heavenly Wisdom guiding the soul to Paradise."


Last night I was lying awake, looking at the stars, and thinking they should be the houses where the saints live, and I began to consider if I would be a great queen or a saint. Anna, who comes from Viterbo, has told me that St. Rose, when she was only nine years old, which is now mine age, went into the streets to preach to the people that they should do penance, and fight for the Pope against the wicked Emperor Frederic. I would like to be such a saint as this St. Rose.

I said so to Brother James della Marca when I went to shrift to-day, and he told me this story :

“Once upon a time there stood a crowd of poor people at the gate of heaven, waiting for it to open. Then cometh St. Peter, with his keys in his hand, and crieth, ‘Make room, make room, all you poor people. Here is a princess about to enter into heaven.’ Then the poor people said, ‘Marry, good St. Peter, we thought on this side of the grave princesses should not be of more account than beggars.’ ‘Ay,’ quoth St. Peter, ‘but you see we have so many beggars and poor persons coming this way every day, that we think nothing of them; but when a princess entereth heaven, it is so rare a sight we must needs make much of her.’” I like Brother James, and I will be one of those rare princesses which go into Paradise.

Yesterday many young lords and ladies came to spend the day with us, because it was Monseigneur Louis’s birthday. There was a banquet, and pastimes and plays in the garden. At night cunning carvers came to entertain us,

which caused things to appear which were not, as flying dragons in the air; and they threw balls of fire at each other's heads, which burst with a sound like thunder. We danced the Capello, and Ciarletto Carracciolo was my partner. He danceth not so well as the Conte di Malatesta, but he hath more wit. He told me a story of two young lovers at Verona, Romeo Montecchi and Giulietta Capuletti, which fell in love with each other at a ball in the house of Giulietta's father. He said, when he heard it, he could not believe love should be so sudden; but that since he had come into the palace that day, he had become so enamoured of a lady, that nothing could exceed it, though he dared not whisper her name. He asked me if I had loved any one yet. I said that when I was at Nancy, Pierre de Luxembourg had said he would be my knight, and fight against all such as should deny me to be the fairest princess in the whole world. This made me love him very much; for I liked to have a chevalier which would kill all those who said I was not fair. Then Ciarletto said he would fight for me, and die for me, if I would love him. But I said I would not, for






that he was not a king ; which made him so angry, he would not dance with me any more.

This day the queen gave me a long rosary of costly beads set in gold, which belonged to her mother, and my dear brother a fair copy of a sweet book, "The Little Flowers of St. Francis." I would fain go to Assisi, and to our Lady of the Angels, and to the mountain of Alvernia, which, after Jerusalem and Rome, should be, I think, the most sacred spot in the world. I read to Théophanie the story of the peace the saint made betwixt the city of Gubbio and the wolf ; and she liked it well, for she would have every one be at peace with one another.

I am ten years old ; and this morn I received, for the first time, the good God into my heart, with a restful, delectable, overpassing joy. After I had left the chapel I craved to be awhile alone, which is not often granted me, but was not then denied ; and, with mine head resting on my hands, I sat at a window which looketh on the bay ; my breast



as tranquil as the smooth deep sea, and thoughts passing through my mind without troubling it, like the white birds on the surface of that blue water. When I had been there well-nigh an hour, I felt a hand on my shoulder, and, looking up, saw my mother, the queen, standing by my side. She gazed on my face meekly and urgently, with a look of endless love.

“Marguerite,” she said at last, “this life is full of troubles, mostly for such as are born nigh unto thrones, and, which is worse, with many temptations. We may not stand so long a space as the twinkling of an eye without the keeping of God’s grace; and when royal persons offend, it is like the failing of the house of which the Gospel saith, ‘great was the fall thereof.’”

Then she, who was not wont to speak of herself, but seemed moved to it in a sudden manner that day, took me on her knees, and conversed with me a long time, disclosing the nobility and greatness of her soul, and showing forth the mightful help she had had from God in her great straits. O, brave heart of my mother, first known this day—(a meet one for


this lesson)—heart which fears God, and hath no other fear, I would fain resemble thee in thy great griefs, if in virtue I may also liken thee!

## CHAPTER VI.

KING RENÉ.

Naples, 19th of May 1438.

MY hand is trembling for joy, and the gladness I feel exceedeth what my pen can describe. The king, my fair and noble father, is come. I have seen him ride through the city on his white charger, with a gold crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand, my two comely brothers by his side. When he passed, the people knelt, as if he had been a god come to reign over them. And is not the likeliest thing to God on earth a monarch which to his exalted rank and royal greatness doth add beauty of outward form and a natural majesty tempered by sweetness? When a great shout rises from thousands of hearts at once, it stops my breathing, and from my head to my feet there thrills a quivering passion, which ends in tears. If any should wish to paint a demi-



god, let them look at King René ; or if a hero, study his actions. If they would describe a perfect man wearing virtue in his face, grace in his aspect, towardness in his behaviour, let them scan his visage, copy his gestures, list to his speech. If some great limner should desire to represent on wood or canvas Hector or Achilles, let them use King René's semblance, and all the world shall applaud. If St. Sebastian or St. Maurice, draw his likeness when he prayeth. If a sage, the king when he is reading. If a poet, when he museth. If Apollo, when he playeth the viol. If a father, still the king when he encircles his children in his arms, and says so pleasantly, "The fairest fortune a prince can bequeath his heirs is the love of faithful subjects."

If there is happiness on earth, it should now reign in this land and in our hearts. For the spring with pleasure leads forward every passing hour, and the air which breathes delight, and the sunshine gilding the flowers, and the sparkling waves kissing the shore, join in one choir of gleesome harmony. Each day in the king's company I learn more of the

story of this country in past ages, and of what poets have written, and skilled men of all times invented to adorn yet further, and extol this piece of earth which God Himself hath made beautiful, colouring it with hues which no painter can match, or he shall be supposed to exceed nature. "O, that I were not a king!" my father sometimes exclaims; "and that in these bounteous groves, and on those blue seas, amidst ruined temples and Christian sanctuaries, I might live for God, for prayer, thought, poesy, and art."

"Would you then be a monk of St. Benedict, sire?" my mother once replied. "For if this should be your pleasure, I will gladly be enrolled amidst the daughters of St. Scholastica."

"Nay, nay," cried the king; "jeer me not thus, sweet Isabel. Thou shouldst be a meet postulant for the cloister, who art never seduced by earthly enticements; but, alas! a passion for war's grim pageantries and the likeness of them in the tournament, the bewitchments of varied scenes, the passion of scenic lore and music's wild enchantment, will abide with me as long as I live."

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"O, wayward prince!" she fondly answered; "to sigh for peace, and cling to unrest!"

"Thou wouldst not forsake the throne, Isabel?" he asked; and then she answered,

"Yea, my lord, very readily, if God so willed it. But His vicegerents should not fly from the posts He assigns. Our subjects, like unto our children, are committed to us by the Supreme King, who at our hands will demand an account of so great a trust."

When this people see the king, they madly worship him. There are some who say he is too good, too *débonnaire*. When the provinces revolt, moved by Alphonso's emissaries, he conquers them; only afterwards to forgive and favour them. Some Calabrian peasants, which would have murdered him some time ago, he straightway pardoned, and gave them safe-conducts to their homes. If I had been in his place, I should have punished those wicked wretches. But he goes and sits in the country people's huts, eats of their poor fare, learns their savage songs, and plays them on the gittern. When he is in Naples, not St. Januarius himself,


if he came to life again, should be more honoured than the king; but if he turns his back awhile, even to fight for them, this people are shaken in their allegiance, like poor weak rootless trees when a foul wind bloweth. They are as perfidious as the sea, and as fickle as the wind. I begin to hate them. I told Ciarletto Carracciolo I despised the Neapolitans, and I am glad I did so; albeit he looked as if he would have killed me.

I have not written in this book for a long time. I like not to note in it troubles and griefs, but rather triumphs. To-day I heard my father harangue the people in the Piazza San Salvatore. The famine hath been dreadful; and he said he could no longer see them starve and perish for his sake. His heart is breaking, and the tears flowed down his visage. He said he must needs release them all from their allegiance, and would return to France. It pained and angered me to hear these words. I would starve and die sooner than yield to the Spaniards; and wherefore should not these mean common dastards starve and die too? They are as mutable as a wea-



ther-cock; for when he said he would go, then they fell to weeping and shouting they would not part with him. But I liked not their evvivas, as I was wont to do.


To-night I have great content in writing what I have seen. When the light declined, the king gathered round him in the court of the palace all the nobles of the city, and from the window I beheld them gathered round him. He stood by his horse with a drawn sword in his hand, Monseigneur de Calabre and forty French knights on each side. This time his words rang in mine ears like the sound of a trumpet. He said he was going forth to die or to conquer; that as long as Naples was faithful, he would shed the last drop of his blood in her defence. That to his noble lieges he commended his most precious treasures, his queen and his children, the while he went to meet their enemies and his. They all shouted, "Tarry, tarry with us, our king, our Rinaldo. Long live the King of Naples!" But he sprang on his horse and darted forward out of the town with so great speed, that his knights could hardly keep up



with him. Then Raymondo di Bartello cried, "To horse! to horse! Let us follow our king!" and like one man the Neapolitan lords rode after their monarch.

Now Naples is besieged! The king of Aragon is encamped nigh unto the walls. My father is away conquering province after province by his valour, and hearts by his clemency; but food cannot enter. The people are waxing desperate. They starve and go mad with hunger. I have given my gold and silver ornaments, and my only costly ring, to be exchanged for bread; and my mother all her jewels. But soon there will be no bread to buy, and then what shall happen? I see her weep when she eateth; and the sight of pale haggard faces when we ride abroad almost breaketh her heart, for the women hold up their famishing children in their arms when we pass, which is a sight of dreadful pity. A thought came into my mind this morning; a great thought, if I can do it. I will steal out in the night, and like that brave Judith, of which the Holy Scriptures say there was not such another woman upon earth in look, in

beauty, and in sense of words, I will secretly repair to the enemy's camp and cut King Alphonso's head off; and then all his army will be filled with fear and run away, and I shall have delivered the city. I shall be renowned in all Europe as the bravest princess in the world, and the starving people shall have bread, and bless me all their days. I must have one of my maids to go with me. Agathe says she should be too affrighted. Barbe made me angry, for she pretends it would be a sin. "That is not possible," I answered; "for the Holy Scriptures do commend Judith for a like action." Then she urged we should perhaps be killed. "I heed not that," I replied, "for then we should go to heaven." She said she was not sure of that, for that to kill any one, and mostly a king, was a doubtful action, if he was ever so wicked. And besides that, she added, "the gates of the city are shut, and we cannot get out, and madame has no weapon wherewith to cut the king's head off." "I can take Louis's sword with me," I said, "which he hath left behind him, and I will deal with the warders so that they shall let me pass. Then will you



come?" But still she said, yea and nay, and would not promise. At last, quoth she, "Madame, I will follow you, if your confessor commends this project." Then I was glad; and I have promised to go to shrift to-day, for I do not doubt that Fra Jacopo will urge me to fulfil it; for he doth nothing but pray for this starving people, and says it is a poor dole to give our jewels to feed them; that we should be ready to sacrifice our life's blood for their sakes.

I went with Théophanie to the church where Fra Jacopo comes to shrive me, but I told her naught of my intent; and I am glad I did not, for I think Fra Jacopo smiled when I spoke of it. I could see he did, though he covered his mouth with his hand. He says it is not lawful to kill any one in that wise since our Lord hath come into the world; and above all not a Christian prince, albeit he should be our greatest enemy. I said, displeased, "Then I am not to be like Judith, and save Naples?" "Nay," he said. "But I will tell you, madame, how you may resemble her. You can make yourself a chapel in your palace, yea, in

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your own chamber, and wear hair-cloth and fast, and ask the Lord, with tears, that according to His will He will show mercy to us, and humble your soul before Him." I must needs remain contented with this advice, for now Barbe will not go with me ; and I should be afraid to go alone and unshriven to do that thing.

Corn hath come into the town, and great droves of oxen and sheep ; and the citizens are beside themselves with joy. For by a wise stratagem the king my father procured the entrance of these provisions into the town ; and he now marches to our rescue.

Tidings have arrived from the Capitanate. The King of Spain is sick at Lucera, and the fight is begun. King René is about to fall like unto a lion on the Spaniards. Yet a few hours more and Alphonso shall be his prisoner, and Naples free ! O God, I would fain pray ; but my heart beats too fast. Minutes seem hours ! hours days ! O, that I could fly, like yonder bird, and see the battle ! O, that I were a man, and had my spurs to win this day ! I cannot sit nor yet stand still. I take

my pen and lay it down. The least noise makes me start. I hate to wait; 'tis the curse of woman's lot.

Victory! victory! the news hath been brought by one from the battle! Naples and France have won the day. King René hath driven the Aragonese before him like the wind doth the leaves in autumn. Alphonso is surrounded; he cannot now escape. Ah! they are shouting in the streets. They have heard the glad news. They call for the queen. Evviva! evviva! The sailors far out at sea shall hear that cry, and marvel at its might.

When they saw us the shouts waxed deafening. I waved one of Louis's flags. Methought they would have scaled the balcony, so great were their transports.

If there is a hotter place in hell than any other, or a more fearful torment than any Dante doth paint, shall it not be awarded to traitors? The pain I feel is worse than grief, worse than extreme pain of body. I am too much angered to weep, and my temples throb with a terrible

pulsation. Caldora, I hate you. Caldora, your treason is so black that I have not words to describe it. You, whom my father loved and trusted ; you, the king's friend—once honoured by that name, now most shamed by it, for highest honours breed deepest disgrace when caitiffs usurp them. O, cruel, unkind friend—friend worse than the bitterest foe—to snatch victory from his hand whom victory so well becomes. To stay his brave troops with a false order, and play the most foul traitor's part. My Lord Constable, but yesterday I should have scorned the man which had dared to call you false. O, I am sick with grief and trouble, and somewhat wroth (which most aileth me) with my father ; for I have heard the queen exclaim : “Alas, alas ! what hath he done ? René, my lord, is frank to a fault, and merciful to excess. What can serve him worse than to charge the traitor roundly with his guilt, and then, after a brief confinement, quickly forgive him, nay, restore him to his favour ! My lord hath the courage of a lion and the gentleness of a dove, but he sorely lacketh the needful wisdom of the serpent.” But a king should be wise. I would my


mother were the king, and my father the queen!

I like not to look back at that last page, albeit my father hath returned to Naples, and there is peace for a brief time. I am yet troubled when I think of Alphonso's escape and Caldora's treason, who has now openly joined the Spaniards, though the king's forgiveness should have heaped coals of fire on his head. But for his vile perfidy, this fearful contest would now be ended. But Hope smileth again—God defend it should be a Siren's smile—on the House of Anjou, and the good king's presence, like unto a loadstone, draweth all affections towards him. Festivals and rejoicings do again occur, and at this time in Castel Nuovo there is gathered together the noblest and fairest company imaginable. In the palace-yard are enacted allegories which please the eye and exercise an attentive mind. Now that I am twelve years of age, I assist at these pastimes, and often converse with the courtiers and lords most famed for their wit. I was most pleased to-day with an ingenious piece of acting, wherein the three greatest

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heroes of antiquity, Alexander, Scipio, and Hannibal, contended before Minos, the monarch of the infernal regions, for the foremost rank in the annals of fame, each in turn setting forth the merit of his actions. Minos, who was a learned lord, somewhat enamoured of me, inquired beforehand which of these great men I preferred. I answered, Scipio, for that he was more virtuous and equally brave with the others. Alexander should come next, and Hannibal the last ; for I hated Rome's enemy, which, of all ancient nations, was the greatest, and most, I thought, to be admired. At the end of the play, Cyprian de Mero, who enacted Scipio, made a long speech, in which he likened King René to that great Roman, and the king of Spain to Hannibal. "For," he said, "Alphonso being old, cunning, crafty, and treacherous, doth resemble the Carthaginian ; but you, sire, like Scipio, are young, just, prudent, and truthful. Murder, rapine, and bloodshed followed Hannibal's steps ; and your enemy, sire, hath spread famine, slaughter, and desolation in this land. Scipio defended Rome, and you, sire, are the shield of the Church, which hath its centre in



the Eternal City. Brief prosperity lifted up the soul of the proud African. Transient successes swell the pride of your arrogant rival. You, sire, like Scipio, are brave, firm, and patient in adversity, and your final triumph shall surpass his. Go on, sire, reign and prosper. Advance from virtue to virtue, and then, not in the court of Minos, but in the realm of God most high, you will for ever reign with the saints and the blest."

I misliked not this discourse ; but methinks I have sometimes written a more artful one in my lessons of history.

O, how brief are earthly joys ! The joyous pastimes of last year are exchanged for so great disasters that the king is well-nigh distraught. Naples is now beset again, almost on every side, and the famine so fearful that the women throw their children under the feet of the king's horse when he rides, and cry to him to feed or destroy them. He, who hath the tenderest heart in the world, must see his subjects perish, for there is none to help them. A triple curse, war, famine, and pestilence, doth scourge this land. If it had not been for


a letter of the Doge of Genoa, which raised a little his drooping soul, he had almost died of sadness. He can endure the extremity of suffering which only touches himself; but others' pangs move him so deeply, that a woman's sorrow doth not approach to his. Nothing will serve him now but to send my mother and me back to France, whither he will follow us when the last ray of hope shall have passed away for the House of Anjou. How like unto a dream do now show the few last years! Stormy ones, I ween, to those old enough, which I was not, to study the clouds, and mistrust fitful gleams of deceiving brightness. Farewell, Italy! Farewell, Naples! The common people here have a saying, "See Naples, and die." Shall this be my fate? What lieth before me, whose life is only lately begun? God knoweth. When I open this book again, I shall behold another sea, another sky, another land, other faces. 'Tis a taste of dying, methinks, to leave any place long known and early loved, never to return to it. O, my father king, the old yearning to be a man cometh back to me in this hour, when a kingdom vanishes in thy grasp like a morn-

ing vision fled. If Marguerite had been a son of thine, not a seely daughter, then she had fought with thee for Naples, watered its soil with the best blood of Anjou, conquered, or, at the worst, died.

After writing this, I sought my father, and found him stringing beads, whilst the colours on the canvas on which he paints were drying. I marvel he can be limning and making rosaries when he is losing a fair realm. He says the work of the hand and the eyes stays painful thinking. My hand and my eye could never so cheat my mind.

I have bade farewell to Fra Jacopo, who prayed God to bless me. He said he hoped we should meet in heaven. I must needs strive to forgive Caldora the traitor, but none knoweth how hard it is.

On board the galley, in the bay of Naples. "Towers and spires of fair Naples, for the last time I gaze on you. Most beautiful handiwork of the good God—bay which hath not, men say, its like on earth; mountain from which liquid fire floweth; sea, only matched by the sky which it mirrors, farewell. Good-bye, Naples—good-bye, all."



## CHAPTER VII.

### SORROW AND JOY.

Poitiers, 1444.

How doth ambitious pain vanish when heart-sorrows arise! Death hath loosed his shaft and killed my sweetest joy. It chose for its prey the most beauteous flower on Anjou's stem. Monseigneur Louis is dead! Alas! alas! How lovely was his life! how glorious, though brief! Hath it been ever heard of in these times, that one of twelve years of age, like unto a young David fighting with many Goliaths, should vanquish bearded men of renown! Ah! Monseigneur Antoine de Vaudémont, you were not afraid of the young Lieutenant of Lorraine, you and your friend the Damoisel de Commercy, that always perfidious and most lying knave, but he yet compelled you to raise the siege of Bar, and to surrender your own proud citadel. Louis, my

fair brother, the most graceful prince God ever made, I loved you with so great a passion that when the tidings of your death came, I fell sick with grief, and well-nigh expired. For a long time I could neither read or write, my brain was so oppressed with sorrow. Nor would I even speak, but sat alone in the dark, refusing to be comforted even by my father and my mother. Then one came to my chamber, charming wisely my melancholy by the picture of his own. This was the Duke Charles of Orleans, so long a captive in England. He cheated his grief for his dead wife, the matchless Isabel, by turning mourning into worship, and building up a fair shrine of poesy, in which memory took refuge with right of sanctuary, and none dared to molest her. Naught untender or less delicate than befitted so sweet a theme there mingled with her name. At first I listened to his similes and mournful rhymes solely to solace my woe; for what he said of Isabel, my love applied to Louis. But afterwards a new pleasure supplanted grief. Each subject he discoursed on derived a radiance from his mind, as natural objects reflect the brightness of the sun. My father and this

prince are newly linked in such close friendship that nothing can exceed it. There is a parity between them of tastes and of talents, but yet a notable dissemblance. The duke's mind is, to my thinking, most like a cathedral full of melancholy beauty and sad serenity, wherein the light shines through violet and crimson hues, and pierces without flouting the shades of sacred retirement. King René's is a temple where fancy plays unchecked, and brightens each object alike. Music is the twin sister of his muse, but philosophy is married with poesy in the duke's capacious soul.

Tours, September 1444.

The court of the King of France is the most merry which can be thought of, and some of his courtiers the most pleasant persons in the world. He is himself winsome, débonnaire, and to his niece Marguerite a most loving and indulgent lord. He saith his pearls are his most costly jewels—Madame Marguerite of Scotland, and his little one of Anjou. O, what a face is that of the Scotch princess! I speak not of its fairness, but of the tale it telleth of genius and woe. I will write more of her

anon. We have conversed together often, and spoken of Alain Chartier. Some time ago she was passing in a gallery where the poet was asleep. She stooped down and kissed his lips, at the which her ladies exclaimed that she should confer so great an honour on one so foul-visaged. "Ah! mesdames," she answered, with her most speaking smile, "think you it is the *man* I honour, and not solely the divine sayings those ill-shaped lips have uttered?" There are men I would fain kill if I could. The dauphin, if I had my will, should not long live. That so sweet a princess should be wedded to that caitiff, who hates and ill-uses her, doth work in me such desires of revenge that I could thrust a dagger in his breast.

Wit and jollity pervade this part of France like a subtle perfume, and men of great renown in arms and in council are as frolicsome as children. Light haviour and light discourses are the fashion here, and even virtue is not morose. All things in turn take the form of a jest. Morality, love, vice, anger, goodness put on cap-and-bells. None are grave but fools, of which few are to be met with, at least in



outward semblance and ordinary speech. I have now seen men the names of which have been famous for many years, such as the Count of Dunois, the Baron de la Trémouille, De Chabannes, and many others. But of all I have conversed with, none equal, I think, the Duke of Orleans, except young Pierre d'Aubusson. He is a young man in so great favour with the king, and of so great valour, which he showed at Montereau, that his praise is in every mouth. His mode of discourse hath in it some singularity. He pays no homage in speech to those he most admires, but if one utters a thought which pleases him, there is a more true flattery in the quick flash of his responsive eye than in any compliments the lips can frame. He said yesterday, as he rode by my side from the chase in the Forest of Marmoutier, that no beauty of any sort he had seen could equal what his fancy pictured.

"If this be so," I answered, "describe, I pray you, what you see on the canvas of your mind."

"I must then be a poet," he replied; "which I am not. But hath not your own thinking, madame, overpast earthly beauty,

greatness, and joy, and soared beyond this visible world, which at most appears to me as the antechamber of a divine palace, or a bridge to be traversed betwixt past nothingness and future perfection, the shadow only of a coming reality, like the visions of the Scottish seers which Madame la Dauphine speaks of?"

I told him that the future of this world so much filled my thoughts that they soared not often beyond it, except in brief times of prayer. Greatness, I owned, was my desire.

"Ay," he said, laughing, "greatness is also my dream. It will be thrust on your highness. I shall have to seek it. Pleasures abound in this court; but how think you, madame? doth not the creeper, pleasure, kill happiness at last, like the enwreathing ivy the oak it covers?"

"Is that your experience, Messire Pierre?" I asked with a smile.

"No," he answered; "only my misdoubt, madame, which future trial must dissolve or confirm."

After so many years' absence and long  
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delays since we returned to France, the false Vaudémonts have been forced to restore Yolande to her parents. They protest she is betrothed to their son, and that to marry her to another should be unlawful. She came here to-day under the escort of some of the king's troops, and is now delivered into her father's hands. She is a sweet, mild-visaged maiden, very like an image of our Lady in one of Giotto's paintings at Santa Chiara. Her behaviour is sedate, serious, and equable. Her speech very modest, each word uttered in low tones, as if wrung from reluctant lips.

When we retired last night to the turret where we sleep, the night being fair and warm, we sat on a balcony which overhangs the river. I kissed her and spake in jest, for I longed to see her smile. She answered timidly, as one who forces speech but would fain be silent. As the light declined, she waxed more bold, if to exhibit grief can be called boldness. Tears began to fall gently and sadly on her bosom, like unto the droppings of an overcharged fountain. Then this dialogue took place betwixt us :

"What aileth thee, Yolande?"

"I dare not say it."

"Dare!" I exclaimed; "my motto is to dare all things except sin."

Then she, in a yet lower voice, leaning against the railing:

"I wish it were not a sin to leap into the river and so to die."

"Is it possible, Yolande, that you love the Vaudémonts, who have so long kept you a captive, more than your noble parents? Their castle was your prison."

"Sweet prison! more delectable than any palace!"

"Have you then ceased to love your kindred?"

"I most love Ferry, my betrothed lord."

"He shall never be your lord. Your father hath sworn that no Vaudémont shall ever wed his daughter."

I was affrighted when I saw her look like a scared dove, the blue veins in her forehead swelling, and her eyes strangely dilated.

"I am Ferry's betrothed. Not my father or any king can break a knot the Church hath blessed. Ferry said so."

“The Pope can loose it.”

“I would throw myself from these battlements sooner than marry any one but Ferry.”

“Ferry ! I hate his name. He hath stolen your heart from us.”

“Nay, when I was a little child, I gave it to him. He never stole it.”

“You have a resolved will, I see, like a true daughter of Lorraine.”

“Lorraine ! yes, I love Lorraine. Anjou I care not for.”

“Shame on you, Yolande ! you, the daughter of King René !”

“I love my father, but I care not for kings. If Ferry was a peasant, I would be one also.”

“A peasant ! I would sooner be bound hand and foot, and cast into the Loire, than not marry a king.”

“What ! will you not wed Pierre de Luxembourg, Ferry’s friend, and, except my lord, the most comely prince I have seen ?”

“No, not for all that the world contains.”

She would not talk any more after this. In the night, when I awoke, I looked on her sleeping, with tears yet on her cheeks, like a child which hath cried itself to sleep.

Ah, me! I love that gentle sister, but I would fain she cared for reading, or painting, or some kind of study. She sits all the day and spins, with her eyes fixed on the river. 'Tis a marvel to me that any one can be so still in mind and in body. My father vows she shall never marry Ferry, but an Italian prince; and thinks she is so mild he fears not her disobedience. Methinks he counts without his host, as the proverb saith. I heard him say last night, "I thank God I have not to constrain my daughter Marguerite's liking; that should be a very desperate encounter; but I fear not Yolande should prove a rebel." Perhaps he may yet discover the chafing torrent is more easily turned from its course than the placid stream. "Oneness hath great power," is a saying of the Comte de Dunois. "If a man or a woman willeth but one thing only, the Lord deliver me from opposing them." I will a great many things; to be great, and to have wealth; to be admired, and in renown of virtue; to be a puissante queen, and a saintly one to boot. But Yolande willeth nothing, I ween, but to be Ferry's wife. See if she compass it not. I think she is bewitched with the river. At

morn and noon and night she doth stand and gaze at the running water, till I pull her by the arm to make her eat, sleep, or pray.

Whilst Agathe was dressing me this morning she said, "Madame, when we were at Nancy, three months ago, did not madame sit to a limner to be painted by him?"

"Yea," I replied; "you very well know I did."

"It is reported," she said, "that this limner, and the gentleman of Anjou which brought him there, came not as they pretended from the Duchesse Jeanne de Bretagne, but from England."

"Wherefore from England? Who should send them?"

"Ah, madame! who in England but the king should most desire to behold a visage the matchless beauty of which every prince of Europe would defend with his lance?"

"Tut, foolish maiden," I replied. "The King of England is about to wed the Comte d'Armagnac's daughter."

"As madame pleases," quoth the wench, submissively.

"It is not as I please," I impatiently answered, for it made me angry to see her smiling, as if she was wiser than others.

"Then it shall be as God pleases," she subjoined.

I had well-nigh said, "It should not be as God pleased," I was so vexed with her manner; but I forbore, and broke off the discourse.

There are daily diversions in this place and little happiness, if Pierre d'Aubusson's suspicion is true, that too much pleasure kills it; for naught but pleasure is thought of, and the day and the night seem too short for the pastimes which are on hand. For my part I would that sleep were no law of nature, for then I would talk with learned and pleasant men one-half of the night, and read and study the other. I perceive that some women are admired for beauty, some revered for goodness, some esteemed for ability. Now, if one was beautiful, virtuous, and witty; if she had withal a firm will and great courage, would she not rule all who approached her? The king, my uncle, showeth me exceeding favour,



and will always have me in his company. My father charged me yesterday, when I rode out with his majesty, to move him to consent to a point in the treaty with England and Rome, which he demurs at; and neither himself, nor mine aunt the queen, nor Madame de Beauté with all her art, can prevail on him to yield therein.

The king hath consented to my reasons. Little Marguerite d'Anjou hath brought to a good issue what princes and queens had in vain compassed. Doth she not then deserve to reign herself one day?

This is another dialogue betwixt Yolande and me.

"I marvel, sister, you never read!"

"Sweet Marguerite, I read my prayers in the Book of Hours the Countess gave me."

"But there are in this chamber our father's poems and Antoine de la Salle's tales, and many other fairly written volumes, which you should peruse."

"Wherefore?"

"For profit and good entertainment."

“The Countess saith it profits more to say one’s prayers and spin than to be a scholar.”

“For my part, I am of opinion it shutteth out one-half of life to refrain from reading. What think you of all day as you sit spinning?”

“I have never thought of what I think about.”

“Then you are like a flower which groweth without knowing it, or a bird singing without intent.”

“But if the flower smelleth sweetly, and the bird singeth pleasantly, doth it matter they should know and intend it? Women which are scholars make not good wives, I have been told, and strive to rule their lords rather than be humble and obey.”

“But if a woman is a king’s daughter, should she not learn to be a worthy helpmate to a sovereign?”

“I ween sovereigns, as well as other men, love obedient wives. The Countess says that when the Duke of Brittany sent envoys to Scotland some years ago to judge of the Princess Isabel, they returned and said she was comely enough and well-shaped, but of wit they could

not perceive she had any at all. ‘Sirs,’ quoth the duke, ‘in my thinking, a woman hath wit enough if she can distinguish her husband’s smock from his waistcoat.’”

“And that same princess hath been despised by her lord, and led a paltry poor life since her marriage, which I warrant you, Yolande, is the fate of witless women, whether on a throne or in a hovel. But I thank God you have sufficient wit yourself to defend with cunning a bad cause.”

“O no, not with cunning. Ferry saith I have none.”

“And no wit?”

She smiled and made no answer.

“Think you,” I rejoined, “if the queen, our mother, had been naught but a spinning housewife, she should have kept Naples for three years, with incredible skill and courage, whilst her lord, our father, was a prisoner?”

“But, methinks, if she had lost it then, the king should now be richer.”

Then I was sent for to the Queen Marie, and had not time to answer this bad reasoning.

Life hath strange events, such as we read

of in tales of chivalry. Yesterday there arrived in this town, which caused no small stir, an embassy from England, in no ways expected: my lord the Earl of Suffolk, the Dean of Salisbury, and many other English lords and gentlemen, the purport of whose coming no one heard. My father was straightway summoned to the king, and tarried a long time in the palace; whither we heard the envoys had likewise been invited. When he returned thence his face was inflamed, and he seemed very much moved; but whether with anger or with joy did not at the first appear. He came and sat down by my mother's side and took her hand. She by a sign dismissed her ladies, and, methinks, she thought it should be bad news, for the heart which hath often thus suffered is quick to presage woe. Yolande and I were working at one frame.

"Look at that petite madame," I heard my father say, directing his glance towards us. I raised mine eyes and smiled.

"Yea, Madame Marguerite, you may well smile," he continued. "For I doubt not you will deem a crown a becoming ornament for your audacious little head."

"A crown?" exclaimed my mother. "What doth my lord mean?"

I had already guessed the truth, and my heart was fast beating.

"I' faith, madame," the king said, turning again to the queen, "the King of England is so enamoured of your daughter's picture, that he must needs despatch an embassy to sue for her hand. Say, Marguerite, wilt thou be Queen of England?"

"Yea, and of France too," I cried, throwing my arms around his neck. At the which he smilingly chid me, and said I was too vain-glorious to claim that title. Then he called Yolande, saying, "Come, my first-born flower! come and salute the Queen of England. If it please God, we shall soon have thee as royally mated as this daisy." Then he enfolded me with one arm, and her with the other. Yolande made no answer, but bowed her head on his bosom to meet mine, and so we embraced.

A queen! The queen of England and of France! My young desire fulfilled! I have seen men since I have been in France which I might have loved if they had been born on a

throne. But I never yielded to the least tenderness for any living man, not even for Pierre d'Aubusson, though I admire his person and his mind, and might have wished God had made him a prince. But I thank Heaven my heart hath always been equal to its high fortune; and it is a maiden heart, unstained by any meaner love, I shall give to King Henry. To-night I shall see Milord Suffolk and his company. Is this a dream? No, I am not asleep. . . . I went to the window to dispel the doubt. There were the green fields, with the sun shining on them. The poppies and the blue corn-flowers amidst the waving wheat, the river, and the boats upon it. From one of them a bird flew straight to the turret window of her chamber. Yolande caught it in her arms. I am certainly awake.

If King Henry is one-half so much my captive as my Lord Suffolk, I shall be the most indulged princess in the world. We conversed for two hours yestereve, and he described the king's passion in such glowing colours that I begin to be jealous of my picture.

"Ah, madame!" this gallant envoy ex-

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claimed, when I expressed this apprehension, "my only fear is, that the king shall be so enamoured when he beholds the reality of the semblance he now adores, that he shall have no ears, no eyes, and no heart for the affairs of the state, but live gazing on and worshipping his queen both night and day, and so fail in his duties from excess of love and happiness."

"That shall never be," I replied; "for I will wed his duties, his interests, and his people together with himself. The cares of state should be the pastimes of royal lovers, my lord; and, for my part, I would sooner be the king's servant than only his toy."

"O, noble words for a monarch's bride!" Lord Suffolk cried. "How will they rejoice the heart of that virtuous prelate, Cardinal Beaufort!"

"Is his eminence, then, my friend?" I asked.

"So much so, madame," he answered, "that his last words to me were: 'Obtain the hand of the Princess of Anjou, my lord, for the king, and you shall not lack my poor prayers as long as I live. These are not days for virtue only in a queen. A king's consort in



this realm should have wit, courage, and be of good counsel in the chamber, and, if needs be, on the field of battle.' ”

Then he described some of King Henry's kinsmen. The Duke of Gloucester, he saith, will always hate me, for he had sworn to the Count d'Armagnac the king should wed his daughter.

Now it seems as if I lived for the first time. My pulse, methinks, beats quicker. Words pass more swiftly from my thoughts to my tongue. O, I had rather be a queen for one year, than a common princess for half a century !

Yolande hath cried all day, and naught will move her to tell her grief. Barbe, Agathe, and even Théophanie, think she is displeased and jealous that I should marry the King of England, and do pity her, I see. But I credit not their thinking. If she is not false, which is impossible, she loves Ferry, and weeps day and night that she cannot marry him. Her visage, which was at first calm, albeit sorrowful, is now often troubled. When her



parents caress her, I see tears in her eyes. Yesterday she stood at the window a long time, kissing that stray pigeon which flew from the boat to our chamber. Then she let him fly, and watched him till he disappeared.

Yolande and I have quarrelled—that is, I quarrelled with her. For there came to the court, two days ago, some envoys of the Duke of Burgundy, and with them, that false and ungracious knave, Robert de Sarrebruche, the Damoisel de Commercy. When I was a little child, I first heard that man's name coupled with so many treasons and vile cowardice, that I have since abhorred it. He was one of those who, before the battle of Bulgneville, dared to say to the brave Barbazan, that gray-headed hero and most valiant knight, because he counselled prudent delay, "Let those that fear stay at home;" and when the battle was engaged, himself fled with his troop like a vile recreant, so that to this day 'tis the custom to say of a craven knight, "He is brave like the Damoisel de Commercy." I have heard that when Barbazan lay dying on the bloody field, with his

wound gaping, the coward passed him, spurring his horse. "Ah!" cried the expiring hero, "whither goes Robert de Sarrebruche? Is this your valour, young knight, so boasted of this morn?" The shameless truant answered curtly: "I promised my love a visit, and must needs pay it;" and rode on. 'Tis a foul disgrace this false knight should stand in the presence of two kings, and be invited to the court; but when I saw Yolande smile upon him with her soft and beaming eyes, and converse with him in a low voice, with a flushed cheek and eager countenance, I was so angered I could have wept. She chose him for her partner. It made me mad to see him hold her hand and whisper in her ear. When the brawl began, Pierre d'Aubusson and I fronted this ill-matched pair; and I should have touched his hand in the dance, but drawing mine away, I said in an audible voice, "Gramercy, Messire Robert, I have promised my love a visit, and I must needs pay it." He waxed pale with rage, and ground his teeth. When Yolande and I were alone, I reproached her in the most stinging words I could think of for her courtesy to this wretch.

She bore it silently awhile; but then broke forth suddenly in this manner :

“Sister, I cannot credit Robert should be so vile as you describe, for then he had never been Ferry’s friend.”

“Ah! if any thing had been needed,” I cried, “to make me detest that man, it should be this friendship. Those who love the Vaudémonts are our foes.”

Yolande took my hand, and with a strong pressure held it the while she said :

“Marguerite, I am Ferry de Lorraine’s wife. I love the Vaudémonts, and if this must needs make my kindred hate me, why it must be so. If I must be the enemy of my lord or of my parents, God help me, for no more sad fate can befall a wife and daughter. But, O sister! have a little pity; for since I have set foot in my father’s house, I have been sore troubled in mind and full of sorrow, robbed of peace, and much dejected. A sister should not add to a grief all too heavy to bear.”

And then the sweet soul began to weep.

“You are happy,” she added with deep sighs; “the whole world doth envy you. Who

so admired, who so loved, who so praised as Marguerite? Should she not then compassion one so wretched as Yolande?"

I kissed her, and we withdrew to rest. In the night, when she thought I was sleeping, she stole from my side, and went to the casement, through which the moon was shining. She read a letter, which ever and anon I saw her press to her lips. Methinks the Damoisel must have brought her that missive from Ferry, whom she calls her lord. It is reported that the Duke of Burgundy hath partly sent these envoys to urge the fulfilment of that old contract. My father's brow was clouded last night. He says, the Vaudémonts may rob him of his lands, murder his subjects, and burn his towns, but that his daughter they shall not have, if his life depended on it. There are exceptions in all natures, and I perceive that most men in one point do differ, as it were, from their own selves. He who is so mild and débonnaire to all others, even to his enemies, is like an unshaken rock in his resentment against the Count Antoine and hatred of this alliance, as the worst disgrace which could befall him.

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He would as soon match Yolande with a poor troubadour, he says, as with Ferry de Lorraine. Yet report describeth this youth as a very paragon of beauty, virtue, and warlike gifts.

This day my father summoned Yolande to his presence, and with endearments and paternal caresses first, then with kingly majesty, and in the end exceeding passion, commanded her to think no more on Ferry.

“How should I not think on my lord?” she answered.

And when he swore she should never marry him, still she replied, with downcast eyes, but firm, resolved lips,

“Ferry is my affianced husband.”

This moved him to more violent anger than I had ever witnessed in him before.

“Ungrateful, unnatural child!” he exclaimed, and appeared quite overwhelmed with grief.

In a few days we go to Angers, and afterwards to Nancy, where my Lord Suffolk will shortly arrive. King Charles will be there,

and more princes than I can count, albeit I heard all their names. The most beautiful and rare jousts will be held at that time. My father doth delight in such displays, and none shineth in the lists with more glory and magnificence, or ordereth with a like skill the pageants which accompany them. Yolande is of better cheer since he is thus employed. When talk is ministered of the grand tournament in the Place de Carrière, she stays to listen with an eager look in her sweet eyes, which mind me of Monseigneur Louis's; and she doth help my mother to embroider a scarf for the conqueror. Ah, many that day will break lances in mine honour. Many will weep that I go never to return. Is there always a drop of sadness in each earthly joy? I would not for the world not be Queen of England, and yet . . . Ah! what should be that plashing of oars under the window? "Yolande, 'qui vive?' as the sentinels say." "Lorraine and Anjou," she answers from the next chamber. Ah! well-a-day! she has learnt the password from the guards.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PLACE DE CARRIERE.

Nancy, November 1st, 1444.

THE Marquis of Suffolk hath exhibited to me this morn the letter of his master, King Henry, in which he says, "As you have lately, by the Divine favour and grace, in our name, and for us, engaged verbally the excellent, magnificent, and very bright Margaretta, the serene daughter of the King of Sicily, and sworn that we shall contract matrimony with her, we consent and will that she be conducted to us over seas, from her country and friends, at our expense."

I could not choose but smile at this missive. "Excellent, magnificent, bright, and serene!" Methinks I must study my actions and my words, and practise a very staid and gracious behaviour in future, to fulfil his majesty's expectations. Margaretta! That soundeth not like mine own name; and albeit mine ears have not been unused to praise, yet

to be termed magnificent hath a novelty in it which I mislike not.

November 2d.

A great company of English lords and ladies have arrived with my Lord Suffolk and his wife, to witness my nuptials, and assist at the feasts and pastimes which will follow. Tomorrow and two successive days I will spend in close retirement at the Convent of St. Marie. This is the Feast of All Souls. I have carried a garland to the tomb of Monseigneur Louis, and prayed a long time in the chapel wherein he lies.

November 5th.

I am a queen! the wedded wife of King Henry, my yet unseen lord. St. Martin, in whose church my troth was plighted, pray for me! An English knight, who is also a poet, says in an ode I have seen, that I, the bride of his sovereign,

"Like to the rosy morning towards its rise,  
Cheered all the church, as it doth cheer the skies."

This is fair poesy; but she that cheered others then needed cheering herself. For when I stood at the altar by the side of the Marquis of Suffolk, to be espoused by him in the king's



name, an unwonted fear chilled my heart, and I began to tremble, which I remember not to have done in any former haps. In eight days I shall be delivered up into the hands of the English. This hath an ominous sound; but this surrender is a loving, joyous, and triumphant one, which filleth every one with delight. I shall part with my kindred, than which none have loved a young princess with a more tender, passionate, and constant affection, or been more loved in return; but is it not said in Holy Writ that a bride must needs forget her father's house, and so the king shall take pleasure in her beauty? Some declare that my lord Henry is monkishly inclined, and overstudious for a lover; but my Lady Suffolk, with whom I conversed yestereve, assures me he is more like to dote on his wife than any other prince in the world. I look at his picture until the painted likeness seems to assume life, and almost speech. The youthful features, fair smooth brow, mild and most expressive eyes, appear to smile on me. Yet in them I perceive a melancholy beauty, which I think must needs exist in the royal visage. No limner would invent it.

November 8th.

I cannot sleep. 'Tis in vain I lie down and try to close my eyes. When the brain is crowded with varied images, it brooks not dull repose. I have lacked leisure to write. The days are all too short for the sports which each hour renews, the stately pageants which mimic war, and the long banquets and the dance which closes every night all other pastimes. The English envoys must needs marvel to see such frolics in this court, for they seem a race more grave than I have yet met with, and prone to melancholy, if I judge by their visages. Yet a true philosophy ruleth not, I ween, their gravity more than our glee; for if one steps an inch further than his rank warrants, or another boweth in a less lowly guise than court usage doth command, I' faith these English nobles fume and scowl as if the world should therefore come to an end.

November 9th.

The tournament which my father planned with so great pains hath begun, and verily 'tis a meet pastime for kings and nobles; but I wish all the brave knights here assembled

formed an army marshalled in array to conquer Jerusalem and Naples. A most glorious yet soft sunshine, such as is seen in the summer of St. Martin, enlivened the field, than which a more befitting one cannot be found for such jousts than this one of Nancy. The flower of France's chivalry is here, and likewise of Brittany, Lorraine, and Allemayne. Also the English nobles are present, and churchmen and ladies not a few, to witness this famous passage of arms. At ten this morn, after dinner, which was one hour earlier than other days, my father rode into the lists with the knights of the attack; my brother with those of the defence. Every chevalier as he passed before the queens and the ladies made due obeisance; and smiles and whispers ensued as each passed by. For majesty and grace, methinks, none can be compared to King René; albeit the Counts of Maine, of Foix, and of Nevers, the Lords of Saintrailles, of Brézé, and of Beauveau, André of Laval, and young Louis de Luxembourg and his brother Pierre Count of St. Pol, are fair and gallant knights. Pierre d'Aubusson, though so young, hath the semblance of an old soldier. He won his spurs

in Hungary, fighting under the brave Hunniades. One knight had his vizor drawn, and no coat of arms on his shield save a black cross. If any in this field could have matched my father in form, figure, and martial carriage, it should have been this unknown knight. When he saluted the queens, he dismounted, which none of the others had done, and made so graceful an obeisance, bending on one knee, that a murmur of applause arose; and when he leaped into his saddle and rode on, every one cheered. Many conjectures were framed touching this knight. Some thought he was the Count of Anjou, others the King of France; but this was quickly disproved, for his majesty soon after rode into the lists bearing the arms of Lusignan on his shield, the famed serpent of the fairy Melusina; and the Count of Anjou, who tilted with him, those of Aragon. The Dauphiness, who greatly affections Yolande and me, turned towards us with a smile and said:

“Mesdames, I will wager these two rings against two flowers out of your posies, that I guess who this knight is.”

“Nay, madame,” Yolande cried before I

could speak,—she whose wont is to be speechless,—“hold us excused, I pray you.”

“Nay,” I exclaimed, “answer for yourself, fair sister. I accept the proffer, sweet princess. Who is the knight?”

“I’ faith,” the Dauphiness replied, “I warrant you ’tis the King of England in disguise. Ah! what a noble wooer he would prove which concealed royalty under the semblance of simple knighthood, and won in the same hour the love of his bride and the honours of the field !”

Lord Shrewsbury, who was standing nigh to the princess, said in bad French and a resentful tone, “’Tis not the custom, madam, for English monarchs to play at knight errantry, and act the part of mad troubadours.”

The Dauphiness drew a ring from her finger and put it on mine, the while she replied,

“My lord, I take your word on this point as a final judgment; but methinks it should have been no disparagement to a monarch, howsoever puissant, to have encountered two kings in these lists, and that those eyes which we see had well excused a chivalrous folly, such as my poor thinking framed.”

The English lord grumbled a few words betwixt his own rough language and French, which were, I ween, meant to excuse his sharp speech. These islanders have the proudest spirit imaginable, and take quick offence, for all their staid speaking and heavy aspect.

My Lord Suffolk sat by my side all the day, and discoursed of England and his King. If I so much as looked at any French prince, or spoke to him, he waxed uneasy. Methinks when I said the sky was fair and the air pleasant he was jealous, and disliked it. Poor my Lord Suffolk! I do pity him. To play the lover for another must needs be a sorry pastime. His grave visage almost moves me to laugh.

November 10th.

To-day at noon the trumpets sounded, and two kings entered the lists to tilt against each other,—King Charles and King René. O, then I held my breath, and my sight almost failed me; for this was no mean contest, no common encounter, and should have had the whole world for a spectator. It was a marvel to see these two crowned kinsmen jousting in such noble and ardent guise in the midst of a goodly

crowd of valiant princes and lords. I would fain not have loved them both ; for then my pleasure should have been greater when my father unhorsed my uncle, who at once turned to the ladies with a gracious frankness which be seemed a king, and cried aloud, "Je n'en peut mais," owning himself conquered ; at the which so loud cries of cheering rose for the victor and the vanquished that the heralds' voices were drowned. Then the Comte de St. Pol tilted with Pierre d'Aubusson, and was unhorsed ; albeit none had surpassed him the day before, and he had received the chief prize from the hands of the Queen Marie. Ah, my Lord Suffolk, you watched my visage with careful eyes during that contest, and seemed contented when I smiled at Pierre de Luxembourg's defeat. I ween that other Pierre had been the most like of the two to prove a Pierre d'achoppement to your king ! The Knight of the Black Cross broke five lances in honour of a nameless beauty, and overthrew all his opponents ; but when my father sent to challenge him, he replied that he had made a vow not to tilt against a monarch. A sudden thought comes into my mind. Ah, Madame Yolande,

peradventure your conscience forbade you to accept the Dauphiness's wager. I must needs clear this doubt before we sleep to-night. Now the banquet is at hand, and then the ball. If my life shall resemble my nuptials, it should prove a merry one; for pleasure treadeth on the heel of pleasure in these days, and pastimes never end. I marvel sometimes that so much glee should precede a long parting, and I wax a little sad. So doth my mother.

November 11th.

To-day Yolande and I sat with the Dauphiness in a bower of the garden, and conversed.

The princess said, "Mesdames, of all the knights assembled in this famous tournament, and which wear garlands of daisies in honour of the Queen of England, which think you is the most like to break his heart when she departs?"

"Ah! without doubt," cried Yolande, "the Comte de Nevers; a more sad visage cannot be seen than his since my sister's betrothal."

Then the princess replied: "Yea, a more enamoured prince, methinks, never existed;



and if your father, mesdames, hath recovered Maine and Anjou, Henri de Nevers is the cause."

"How so, madame?" I said, misliking her speech. "The King, my lord, freely yielded those provinces to my father's rightful claims."

"Freely!" quoth the lovely princess. "Ah, he had no greater freedom therein than a poor prisoner under the rack. The little blind tyrannic god holds him so tightly in his power since the day Madame Marguerite's image robbed him of his peace, that he hath no more liberty, this great king, than a caged bird. He may well thank God that Monseigneur René did not exact from him what King Herod promised his dancer—the one-half of his kingdom."

"But what share had the Comte de Nevers in this cession?" I again asked.

"This," answered the Dauphiness. "Monsieur de Suffolk wrote to his majesty that a very perilous and most enamoured suitor would obtain madame's hand if King René's demands were refused, and so worked on his fears that the provinces were promised and Monseigneur Henri reduced to despair."

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"He is a brave soldier and a sweet poet," I said; "but one thing he lacketh."

"What?" asked the princess.

"Royalty," I answered.

"Royalty!" echoed the Dauphiness. "Ah, sweet heart, when life waneth, the glitter of that bauble, a crown, fadeth away as speedily as the hues about yonder setting sun."

"What know you, my fair cousin," I replied, "of life waning, when the morning of yours is only in its dawn?"

"Mine!" quoth she, with a look of scorn tempered by sadness, "*Fi de la vie! ne m'en parlez plus.*" And her eyes fixed themselves on the sky, a moment before coloured with crimson and gold, but now beginning to wax gray. Then after a while musing, she abruptly said: "And the Lord of Varennes, the gallant Pierre de Brézé, was he not also one of your majesty's suitors?"

"Her knight," Yolande said, "not her suitor. Marguerite is too proud to have entertained less than a royal prince in her train of even hopeless lovers."

Then the Dauphiness said: "Messire de Brézé was appointed to negotiate the terms for

the exchange of the Queen against Maine and Anjou."

Yolande exclaimed: "I would sooner be a peasant girl, and have a lover who should himself woo and wed me, than be exchanged in this royal fashion for lands and pelf. Methinks the King of England hath bought my sister."

This speech angered me not a little.



## CHAPTER IX.

### A VOW.

November 12th.

THIS night I have spoken for the last time, I ween, with Pierre d'Aubusson. It is not like I should set eyes on him again. What will the King, my uncle, say of his resolve, who was wont to declare that so great wisdom and so much fervour had never been seen together in one person? If the Dauphin, who mislikes most men, and yet likes him, did repent last year of his rebellion, and submitted to the King, Messire Pierre had the praise of it; and now the court shall see him no more.

I will set down the discourse I held with him when, after the banquet, we stood in a gallery which overlooked the dancers.

"Messire Pierre," I said, "you must be a contented person to-day, for none have excelled and few equalled you in the lists."

"Madame," he replied, "if each knight vanquished in that vain pageant had been an

infidel foe, then verily I had rejoiced. But empty honours breed more confusion than contentment in a Christian when tales are ringing in his ears such as I have this day heard."

"What hath so strangely moved you, Mesire Pierre?" I asked. "What inflames your visage with so burning a flush?"

His clenched hand and fixed yet vacant gaze, as one looking on yet not seeing what lies before him, betokened an emotion which for a while impeded speech; then he slowly uttered the word "Warna." The blood now mounted to my face, for I was ashamed that the tidings which had awakened in him so deep a passion had not been present to my mind since I had heard them in the banquet-hall, and shuddered at their import.

"Is this a time," he broke forth, "for mimic fights, idle sports, and luxurious revelry? For mine own part I could as lief sit down to eat and rise up to play with the guilt of murder on my soul as dally here in shameful ease, when deeds are wrought by accursed hands which cry to God and man for vengeance; when Christian kings and priests die in torture,

flayed alive by the Turks ! O God, that Hunniades had been there !”

“ I crave Christ’s pardon,” I cried, “ that my unthinking mood dulled for a while the edge of indignant sorrow for these dire haps. But believe me, sir, I am not one whit less sensible of their horror than yourself. Methinks the name of ‘Warna’ should be a knell in every Christian ear, and the ghosts of King Vladislas and the holy prelate Cesarini haunt our beds and our feasts until such time as the last infidel which slew them is destroyed.”

“ There spoke my noble princess,” Pierre replied. “ But it is not only the strong arm or the boastful courage of the natural man which must wage this war and avenge these martyrs. No, when the Cross is trodden under foot by its foes, it hath to be borne not by the hands alone but the hearts of its champions ; hence the vow which I now make in your hearing, young queen, whom God hath, I think, sent to hear it not without a gracious intent. Few in yonder crowd would commend the sudden resolve ; but albeit nursed in pomp and pleasure, you have yet been familiar from your cradle with heroic thoughts,

and from your lips I fear not dissuasive words. Some might deem a sanctuary and an altar a more befitting place for the utterance of this oath ; but no, this is the place, this the time in which God hath called me. . . .”

“To what?” I asked, somewhat moved ; for if this man had been a king, I should perhaps have loved him.

“To the making of this vow,” he replied ; and then said in a firm, clear, and most impressive voice, albeit not a loud one, “I, Pierre d’Aubusson, do from this hour renounce the love of woman, the joys of home, the hopes of fortune ; and I do moreover promise the Lord my God, His Blessed Mother, and St. John, to wage war against the infidels in the Order of St. John, and under its law to pray, fast, fight, and obey all the days of my life. So help me God, who hears this vow.”

“Amen !” I unconsciously said. It may be I misliked not to hear him renounce all other loves than that great one which had kindled this burning flame in his breast. “It is a noble vow,” I said ; “but have you counted the cost ?”

“The cost !” he repeated with a smile the

most beautiful I have ever seen. "Ah, daughter and bride of a king, I give God thanks in this solemn hour that you were born so far above me—you, the fairest of His handiworks—that no earthly dream of human happiness mingled with the reverent worship I have paid you, so that there hath been no need to weigh in the balance the cost which alone should have been one."

He hesitated a moment, and then, as I seemed still to be listening, though I made no answer to his speech, he went on :

"And yet, methinks, I could wish I had been one who might have aspired to the hand of Marguerite d'Anjou ; one who might have been blessed with a love pure, mighty, and sweet as thine shall be for thy wedded husband, O royal maid ! more royal in thy gifts than in thy birth, most royal in greatness of love ; for then I should have surrendered at the Lord's bidding a peerless joy, a perfect earthly contentment. This, this should have been a worthy sacrifice for a soldier of the Cross."

"And if it had been thus," I asked, "should you still have gone?"

"Yea," he answered, "or I had been a



recreant. And now, madame, if in after years the name of Pierre d'Aubusson reaches your majesty's ears, as of one living to defend the Church, or dying fighting for Christ, pray for such a one if he lives, yet more if he dies. If God's voice hath spoken to him in your hour of joy and triumph ; if in the midst of the splendours of an earthly court the tale of glory and of shame which fell unheeded on a thousand careless ears, stirred but two hearts this day, yours and his—"

"Mine !" I exclaimed ; "mine was only moved by a sterile and impotent pity."

"Nay," he rejoined ; "no emotion is sterile which taketh its rise in a noble soul. Be it yours to awaken the spirit of true Christian chivalry in the realm of England, and by that power which many misuse, a queen's and a woman's, raise up new champions of the Cross."

Then he bade me farewell ; and to-morrow he will take leave of the King and the Dauphin, and depart for Rhodes. 'Tis a strange thought ! I thank God I never loved Pierre d'Aubusson ; but I think I shall not often look on his like again. I told Yolande

this hap. She said she hoped there should be no more Crusades ; for which I chid her. Methinks love doth make a heart to lose the greatness which should dwell in royal breasts ; and yet in my mother this effect is not seen. It may be that a wife's affection hath more nobility in its nature than a fond maiden's. If this is so, I thank God that I shall know none other than that more generous one.

November 13th.

I am troubled and sore perplexed. The doubt of yesterday hath grown into a certainty. The Knight of the Black Cross is no other than Ferry de Lorraine. I noticed signs exchanged between him and Yolande ; and when his horse fell with him, she well-nigh swooned. Heaven forgive me if I judge rashly, but I think some plot is in hand. She trembles as an aspen-leaf if a door doth but shut or open with a sudden noise, or a bird flies across the sky. Her eyes have an uneasy glance, as if ever expectant of a new hap. Last night, when I was in bed, and, as she thought, asleep, what did she do but cut off a lock of my hair ! I caught her hand, and,

laughing, said, "Halte là, sweet thief; give me back my hair. I will have it encased in gold and richly jewelled, for a parting gift to thee."

But she answered, "Nay." She must have it then, and would not let it go. Soon afterwards I heard her sob.

"Foolish one!" I cried, throwing my arm round her neck, for she was now lying by my side, "Foolish one! still to grieve for that Ferry."

"Nay," she replied in a low voice; "I grieve not for him to-night."

"What! hast thou then found a new lover?" I jestingly asked.

She started up as if stung by this light word. "Fie on thee, sister," she said, "to mock me in this wise!"

"Prithee, pardon me," I whispered, caressing her.

"Yea, a greater offence I must have forgiven thee this night," quoth she, hiding her face in her pillow.

What shall I do? I must needs soon decide. Agathe hath discovered to me the

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plot I did suspect. In the midst of the tournament this day, if my father is not warned, Ferry de Lorraine will carry off Yolande under the eyes of the assembled kings and princes. He will enter the lists with twelve knights in his train, one of whom is Agathe's kinsman, and challenge the knights of Anjou. Then, when the combat is at its height, and all eyes fixed on the champions, he will rush, by a sudden action, to the pavilion wherein we sit; and Yolande, who hath been used in old days to leap on to his charger, which for fleetness is unmatched, shall be borne, like another Helen, to the fortress of our foes. If I reveal this plot to the King, his anger will know no bounds. He will send Yolande to a convent, as he once threatened, and perhaps slay Ferry. Shall I cause her this terrible grief? or shall I suffer my father to be thus wronged? No; that should be impossible. This will I do. I will charge her to her face with this unseemly and rebellious intent, and procure, by remonstrances and threats, if needs be, that she shall herself refuse to leave the palace to-day.


My God! this is yet worse. She hath

knelt at my feet, her hair hanging disordered about her face, her eyes full of tears, and her plight so piteous that any one must needs have had compassion on her. She caught hold of my hands and kissed them as one who sues for life. O, not for her own life would the poor soul have pleaded with so great urgency. But she fears for him whom she doth so idolise ; this hope, she says, hath kept her alive since she was parted from him ; and that she will now die if it fails. And if my father should kill him, she then would lose her senses, and perhaps her soul. When I tried to reproach her, the blood crimsoned in her cheek, and she said with so much of pride as became her well,

“Sister, I am no truant daughter, or love-sick maiden parted from a new lover, but an affianced wife, who will never break her plighted troth.”

Then relapsing into tears, she wrung her hands and cried,

“You have seen his noble carriage ; you have never yet seen his comely visage. You have witnessed his prowess ; you have not known his tender heart. He cherished me



when I was a little child, and had no need to woo me when I became a maiden ; for the love of the child changed not as years went on, but waxed larger as the heart that held it."

Finally she clasped her hands together, and in a mournful manner exclaimed,

"Marguerite, this is the first time one has sued to thee in deep anguish. Peradventure thou wilt thyself one day kneel and sue for like mercy at the feet of one who shall hold thy weal and woe in his hands. O, be merciful now, as thou wouldst then have mercy shown to thee. If now thou breakest my heart, a dark shadow shall fall on thy bridal."

These words pierced my heart, but shook not my resolve. Never could I brook, not if she was to have died at my feet, that aught of shame or disgrace should rest on my father's house ; so I left her and sought the King, and there fought a battle which hath left me weary, but exulting. This is the second great triumph I have obtained since my fourteenth birthday. O, with what impassioned vehemence I urged on my father that, as his parting benison on a child most loved, his

favourite since her natal hour, he should yield his consent to Yolande's marriage with Ferry de Vaudémont ! Refusal on refusal he uttered ; and still I pleaded, urged ; and at last, when imperious prayers, tender reproaches, and bursting tears, which most did move, but not yet conquered him, had been exhausted, I broke forth :

“Sire, I have in my keeping a secret which closely touches your honour, if unrevealed ; and yet here I do swear that naught shall rend it from me if you grant not my suit.”

At first he was angered at this threat ; but methinks something in my eyes, which I ween flashed with no common fire, bewitched him, for he cried, half in passion, half in jest,

“Avaunt, thou resistless witch ; avaunt !”

And then I threw my arms round his neck, and would not take off my eyes from his struggling face till he had smiled and consented.

Ah ! who shall resist Marguerite d'Anjou ?

'Tis a marvel to me that the victory of this day should have cost so much labour ; for no sooner was it achieved than, with the pliable

spirit and natural contentment which belongeth to my father's temper, he surrendered in one short hour the hatred which had seemed so fierce. Like a weed which hath no root, it was loosed from the soil of his heart. And, moreover, his fondness for romance changed as by a magic wand the whole colour of his thoughts. When he heard that Ferry de Lorraine was the unknown knight which had gained so great a repute in the lists, he commended the bold lover; and, methinks, would not then have exchanged this son-in-law for any sovereign in Europe. I admire that what seemed like an oak of firm resolve should prove a mere sapling. Ah me! what a change hath twelve hours wrought! There is Yolande, the most happy person in the whole world, beaming with smiles which sometimes turn to laughter, sometimes from very excess of joy to tears; and I see my father from this window leaning on the arm of the hated Ferry, in as kinsman-like, yea and paternal a fashion, as could be thought of. And she who hath procured this happiness for others, what aileth her to-day? Is she not so contented with her fate as some days ago? Hath the sight of Yolande's



happiness made her misdoubt if to be a queen should be the greatest joy on earth? No; I love my kindred; I love France; I love youth's memories, but far more greatness.

## CHAPTER X.

### AN ENDING AND A BEGINNING.

November 15th, 1444.

THREE leagues from Nancy ! a short space to traverse ; but how long in respect of the past and the future, which it seemeth to divide ! Here, where we are halting to rest, my dear uncle the King of France hath parted with me. O sire, you embraced me many times with exceeding great affection, and your eyes were full of tears when you said, "I seem to have done nothing for you, my niece, in placing you on one of the first thrones of Europe ; for it is hardly worthy of possessing you." O sweet uncle and most noble king, if I should forget your love and goodness, may none in this her native land remember Marguerite d'Anjou whilst she lives, or pray for her when she dies.

I cannot restrain my tears ; grief overflows the limits set to it. I did not weep this morn when my mother kissed me for the last time ;


but now, like a surprised citadel, my courage surrenders.

Barr, November 16th.

Disseverance of hearts most tenderly attached, how doleful is the suffering you inflict ! My father is gone ! When he clasped me to his breast, he said nothing ; nor could my lips utter the word farewell. But I know that in that final moment he commended me to God with as hearty a prayer as the most passionate paternal love could frame. I followed him with my eyes as long as he was in sight, but he never once turned round to look at me. Monseigneur de Calabre and the Duc d'Alençon yet ride with me. Soon none but the English will have charge of their queen.

Mantes, March 18th, 1445.

Four months, which it ill pleaseth me to think of, have passed since I wrote in this book. Heavens ! that lack of money should prevent a monarch from receiving his bride ! Is this credible ? and if credible, honourable ? What a stubborn, disloyal race these islanders must needs be, that they lay not their wealth at their sovereign's feet at such a time, and sue to him



to accept it ! I admire that these proud lords should be so mean as to withhold from their king what his necessities demand. I have seen the brave Provençal nobles and the lieges of Lorraine and Anjou, even when their provinces have been ravaged and well-nigh destroyed, force gold on King René, and sell their jewels to aid him. It makes me mad to hear these Englishmen say that King Henry writes letters to the Goldsmiths' Company, to *entreat* them, forsooth, to do their devoir at the coming of his wife, and the like to others of those mean companies to sue for money, that he may have the means to espouse and crown his consort as befits his royalty. If the King did not himself grieve at my delayed coming, which I think he does, I had ere now despatched a messenger to the kings of France and Sicily, to crave to be restored to their keeping, and peradventure wedded the Comte de Nevers. But now we are at Mantes, and hopes arise that in a few days we shall embark. The lord regent, Duke of York, is here. We sup with him to-night, *at his own cost*, I heard from Monsieur Brecknock, our treasurer, who informed me thereof with no small glee. Verily that good man's


computus is his religion : he sets more store, I ween, on a ducat than on an Agnus Dei.

Mantes, March 19th.

The Duke of York hath entertained me with exceeding great courtesy. He is noble in aspect, graceful in manner, pleasant in discourse. After supper yestereve, he sent for his son to kiss my hand. This little Earl of March, now three years of age, is a very fair child, of a white and pink complexion, such as is not seen in France. My lord King Henry hath restored this prince to his rank and dignities, and from Earl of Cambridge made him Duke of York. He said at dinner to-day that he, Richard Plantagenet, owed s<sup>o</sup> great a debt of gratitude to his king, that nothing could exceed it, nor life be long enough to give tokens thereof.

Vernon, March 21st.


Last evening Lady Suffolk conversed with me some time, and the theme of our discourse was her cousin, the Lord Cardinal Beaufort. She says he is a prelate of great virtue, and so entirely attached to the King, and contented with his marriage, that he will be ready on all



occasions to aid me with his counsel. I answered to this speech that my best adviser should be the King himself. Whereupon she replied that, albeit his majesty had an excellent wit and discretion, he was not always so resolved in his thinking as could be wished; or, if in thinking he excelled, in the doing thereof he sometimes did hesitate. She added, that some of the English nobles were so adverse to good government, so turbulent in their humours, and the Duke of Gloucester so great an enemy to me, that an experienced counsellor like unto my Lord Cardinal would be very needful to my young years, and assist me to defeat their machinations.

Rouen, March 23d.

I am forced to borrow money, which chafeth me not a little. It is an insupportable thing that I should be constrained to solicit of the English lords of my suite means wherewith to reward trifling services, which Monsieur Brecknock will not requite; like when the poor mariners which rowed us across the Seine to-day cried "largesse" as I passed, after he had paid them a niggardly fare. I have pledged my vessels of mock silver to the




Duchess of Somerset for a few pieces of gold. I am not a little angered at the talk which is ministered amongst my attendants touching my expenditure. I bought at Mantes fourteen pairs of shoes, which I bestowed on poor bare-footed women on the road. Jean Brecknock disliked this purchase, and said it would be no easy matter to find money for the remainder of my journey. If I *am* a queen, I will noways brook this usage. Had poverty been my choice, I would have elected, like St. Isabel, the sister of St. Louis, to live a bare-footed nun of the Order of St. Francis ; but to be styled your Majesty, and yet denied a few pieces of gold wherewith to give alms, is too base a condition for one of my house and heart.

Honfleurs, April 3d.

Day followeth day, and yet England's coast, like unto a delusive mirage, mocks my hopes. But patience, proud heart ! Naught of greatness can be achieved without it.

Honfleurs, April 8th.

Now the ship is in sight. To-night we shall embark. O sea most wild and rough, and all unlike the blue one which is seen at



Naples and in Provence, prithee be merciful to-day ! Surge and roar, if thou wilt,—thy ups and downs I can endure ; but let thy rude arms carry me to my husband and my kingdom. Winds, adverse and strong, abate your violence ! Clouds, black and dense, disperse ! Time, pass swiftly ! To-morrow I shall see England !

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Here the writing ended in the early portion of the Queen's journal, which she gave to me, Margaret de Roos, at Southampton. She ceased for some time to write on her tablets, fearing methinks to disclose in this wise her thoughts in England, lest any should by surprise discover them ; or it may be she lacked leisure for this employment. I then took up the pen, being unwilling that her majesty's actions should be unrecorded, or those discourses forgotten which she at sundry times held with me in the first years of her marriage. Events which appertain to mine own history and that of persons I have known, both in mine own country and in France, are sometimes involved in this narrative. What through the course of time has thus been joined together, I find no reason to dissever ; and it hath also



happened that when letters have been written to me relative to these haps, and profitable for future history or present edification, I have likewise inserted them in this manuscript.

### *The Lady Margaret de Roos's Narrative.*

On the 21st of April the Queen rode from Southampton to Tichfield Abbey, where the King was to espouse her on the morrow. None but a cold or disloyal heart had been unmoved, I ween, when the cavalcade approached the convent-gate, and that long-looked-for meeting was at hand. I could not restrain my eyes from watching the Queen's visage as we drew nigh to the portal. Her colour came and went ; but I saw she was resolved to preserve a composed demeanour. She beheld the King standing on the threshold, with my lord the Cardinal by his side. He came forward to receive her, and she bent the knee with a wifely reverence and so sweet a grace, that all who witnessed it must needs have admired that one so young should join so much dignity with humility in the same action. She was, I think, struck at once, less with any ordinary majesty



(if two such opposite words can agree) in the King's countenance than by a subduing gentleness, which few can see unmoved. He quickly raised the lovely lady, saying, "St. John, this should not be!" and in a loving fashion saluted her. Then taking her by the hand, he led the way to the chapel through the cloisters, and those that were near them heard him say :

"Fair wife, God our Lord hath been so bountiful in the giving of thee to me, that I would fain offer up thanks to Him, if it pleases thee, before we further converse."

She assenting, they approached the altar, and the *Te Deum* was sung. The Lord Cardinal afterwards said some prayers; and I noticed that the King's eyes never wandered from the crucifix; but not the like of the Queen's, which sometimes glanced with curiosity at more objects than one. Afterwards they walked in the garden of the Abbey, and sat down on a bench in the pleasaunce, where all their suite could see them discoursing for an hour with great mutual contentment.

When the Queen had dismissed her women that evening, she sent for me to read to her, as I had been wont to do since her illness at

Southampton ; but before I had opened the book she said,

“I was thinking of Pope Gregory the Great.”

“Truly, madame,” I answered, “your majesty’s thoughts do always, I well know, run on greatness ; but what should bring that holy pontiff to your mind at this time I am too ignorant to discern.”

She laughed, and replied,

“Where hath your wit fled to ? Did not St. Gregory cry, when he saw the British captives, ‘Non Angli, sed angeli’ ?”

“Ah ! even so,” I exclaimed, smiling, for now I perceived her drift. “The King’s aspect is not English but angelic.”

She bent her beautiful head assenting, and bade me read ; but soon stopped me to ask if the King’s eyes were not of a darker blue, in my thinking, than his picture had represented, and if he was not taller than she had been told. Then she broke forth in praises of my Lord Cardinal, and said she had found him most excellently disposed towards her ; that he was, she doubted not, very wise and holy, and had an excellent understanding. He and the Duke

of Somerset and my Lord Suffolk would always be her very good friends. The King, she thanked God, had greatly commended them as his well-beloved kinsmen and trusty counselors. "He did not say one word of that hateful Duke of Gloucester," she added, "who is my enemy."

The royal marriage was a fair sight; and for beauty, sweet piety, and mutual contentment, no wedded pair could surpass King Henry and his bride. The days which followed their union were as bright and blissful as the most loyal hearts could desire. Her majesty's loveliness enchants all beholders, and what her aspect promises, her speech fulfils. Even the Lady Isabel Butler is obliged to own she is fair, and the courtiers cry out that Marguerite is not Queen of England only, but also of love and beauty. Through her early majesty of mien and haviour girlhood sometimes pierces. She exclaims now and again, "Mesdames, I am more contented to be my lord Henry's wife than to be the Queen of England; but nevertheless I am most contented that he is a king, and I his queen."

His majesty wedded her with the ring

with which he was sacre'd at Paris ; a fine one, garnished with rubies, the Lord Cardinal's gift. She was pressing her lips on it one day as I was standing near her, and catching my eye at that moment, with a look of joy the most enchanting that could be seen, she exclaimed,


"I have no reason now to envy Yolande. The most enamoured peasant youth dotes not on his bride more than my king on me ; the most lovelorn knight of fairyland worships not the lady of his thoughts more than England's monarch his queen ; and Ferry's passion of twelve years is surpassed by three days of King Henry's wedded love."

When it was my turn to ride by her side, she would point to the shady groves and verdant slopes, and say, "The colour of England is green ; and poets say that signifies hope." When we passed a meadow starred with daisies, "The King," quoth she, "declares the fields do emulate his nobles and knights, which in their bonnets of estate do wear my emblem flower. These smiling meads, he agreeably says, display the same token of loyalty to his Marguerite."

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It is true that there is now none of both sexes and all ranks which doth not delight to wear the daisy for her. From the towns on the way issue noble companies of lords and esquires to do homage to their sovereigns. Her majesty was a little angered on one of these occasions. Of all the gifts she had received since her coming to England the one which most pleased her was a young lion, which at Basingstoke, where we lay one night, a gentleman presented to her. She said it was the cognisance of her house, and a right princely gift, which she would fain retain in her household; and the royal beast, being yet young, would be tamed, she doubted not, and would prove in time as tractable as a dog. But none of her suite would take charge of this favourite, and it was carried to the Tower of London by two keepers.

Monsieur l'Escosse, a squire of the King of Sicily, who accompanies the Queen, quarrelled with Mr. Brecknock because he complained that he had to pay 2*l.* 5*s.* 3*d.* for the carriage and food of this lion. These Provençals take umbrage at the poverty of our King, as if their own sovereign was not the most needy



prince in Europe. The Queen admires that his majesty should lack wealth when so great riches are to be found in England. When the rain compelled us to take refuge in a small hostelry between Basingstoke and Guildford, I heard her say to M. de Serrecourt, one of the French gentlemen in her suite, "Messire, see you not that in this country a man, howsoever poor and humble he may be, serves his table with silver dishes and drinking-cups? The vessels of silver in this parlour would not disgrace the house of a French noble."

"Yea, madame," the Frenchman replied ; "and there is not a parish church, I perceive, or a convent, no not one of mendicant friars, but possesses crucifixes, candlesticks, censers, and cups of gold and silver. These English religious houses are more like baronial houses than monasteries."

The King and Queen on this journey attended Mass every morning, and each time made an offering for the poor of a gold angel. They say the office of Our Lady together in a low voice, and each time they pass a church dismount and pray for a short space.

At Greenwich their majesties lodged at the

Duke of Gloucester's palace. His highness came to meet them with five hundred men wearing his livery and badge, and many watched with eager eyes the behaviour of the Queen and of the Duke when he saluted her. In the visage of the one was to be seen a defiant courtesy; in the other an undisguised haughtiness which it pained me to behold. The marked favour shown to the Beauforts by her Grace even in the Duke's own palace must needs offend him. Monseigneur Gilles de Bretagne, who conversed with me awhile that night, said he feared this would confirm the Duke in his ill-will to her majesty, and that a more dangerous enemy could not exist. When I saw the Queen afterwards, she said, "It mislikes me to sleep under this roof."

"Ah, madame," I had the boldness to answer, "would that your majesty exercised the witching power God hath given you to conjure hatred ere you depart! Methought I saw anger and admiration in the Duke's face struggling for mastery; and who can foresee the haps which may ensue if resentment is kept alive?"

"Be not afraid," her Grace replied; "I

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am already mistress of the King's heart, and fear neither duke nor earl." Then she gazed on the Thames, and a proud smile lighted up her face. "How majestic," she exclaimed, "is this broad river! and how noble these ships we see yonder! These are the bulwarks of our kingdom—the wooden fortresses of this mistress of the seas; this small island—small in size, but great in power. England is like me," she said, turning to a mirror; "not very large, but capable, I ween, of ruling the world if it lists."

"Madame," I replied, "M. de Serrecourt ascribes our country's greatness to a quality which, if I may stand excused for the thought, is not peradventure as eminent in your majesty as some others."

"I misdoubt there is a malicious intent in this speech, Madame de Roos," the Queen answered with a smile. "What is that good quality which is an element of greatness in that gentilhomme's thinking?"

"Madame, when we came from the cathedral at Winchester on Sunday this monsieur said to Monseigneur Gilles, who repeated it to me: 'Ah, my prince, I have now discovered


why the English conquer our provinces, and are so puissant, though they are not more brave, and have less wit than the French.' 'What is your discovery?' quoth the prince. 'Alas, Monseigneur, their patience is so great. Monsieur de Wicestre preached one whole hour and half another, and they endured this long sermon without complaint. When hath it been heard of that a French preacher found so great fortitude in his hearers?'

Her majesty laughed, and said 'she was somewhat of the same opinion as her countryman, and that also the long prayers of the English exceeded her ability.

From Greenwich to Westminster triumphal arches were erected, and various pageants performed, to the Queen's great comfort and that of such as came with her. She exclaimed several times, "I would my father could see these ingenious devices and scenic displays; for nothing would give him greater content than this ingenious welcome to his daughter." All the magistrates of London and the crafts of the same came riding on horseback in blue gowns, with embroidered sleeves and red hoods, to escort her into the City, which was

beautified with fine hangings, and enlivened with sumptuous shows. Justice and Peace kissed each other at the bridge of Southwark. Noah's ship was on the river. At Leadenhall a speech was made by Madame Grace, the Chancellor of God. At the Cornhill St. Margaret recited an ode. At the great conduit at Cheapside the Wise and Foolish Virgins greeted the Queen ; and at the Cross at Charing Cross the New Jerusalem was pictured. The French gentlemen smiled at some of these pageants. I could hear them commend in a low voice those of their own country, where, in their opinion, of late years more graceful and erudite fashions have prevailed, and heathen gods and goddesses are set forth in place of saints and angels, which methinks is a bad exchange, and very unchristian. Monsieur l'Escosse says all things are sad in England: the skies, the visages, and even the sports ; and that these last seem duties rather than pastimes.

On the day the Queen arrived at the palace in Westminster the chief persons in the State and the Court came to pay her their devoirs ; the Duchess of Bedford amongst others. She conversed some time with her majesty in a very




agreeable fashion, and commended to her with many adroit speeches Mistress Woodville, her daughter. She said it was the greatest contentment to her in the world that this young lady was attached to the Queen's service, and that for this favour which had been shown to her she, the Duchess, was the most indebted person in England to her majesty's goodness. But I see that the Queen, albeit much entertained by this royal lady's pleasant conversation, dislikes so much her marriage as a degrading thing to one of her birth, that she is not, I think, favourably inclined to Mistress Elizabeth, who she says is neither fish nor fowl. The Lord Cardinal, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the Provost of Eton, discoursed with the King in the evening. Before their majesties retired to rest prayers were said in the chapel.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### FLOREAT ETONA.

“FLOREAT ETONA !” How sweetly those two fair words flowed from the lips of England’s young Queen as she stood in front of the noble college which her lord the King built for the honour of God’s holy name, the increase of virtue, the dilation of cunning, and the establishment of the Christian faith ! A loud cry of greeting burst from the collegers and the crowd assembled to receive “La Belle Marguerite” on this her first visit to our Lady of Eton. The boys all wore daisies in their hats. The sky and the earth both seemed to smile on her. The ancient gray towers of Windsor, the newly-erected college’s fane, the meadows studded with gold and yellow flowerets, the old trees of the playing-fields, the broad river, its little boats, and the glad faces of the young scholars, were all lighted up by the broad sunshine, and welcome writ on every countenance, every leaf, and every



sail; each waving blade of grass looked to be cheering her as she passed, and I fancied I heard the words, "Long live the Queen!" resounding in the bells of the old church of St. Marie.

The most renowned and noble scholars surrounded their majesties, and conversed with them in the cloisters of the college, paying their devoirs to the lady Queen, whose learning and ready wit they all marvelled at. When Lord Talbot approached, who a few days before had made the King and her an offering of the most finely painted missal yet seen in England, she said :

"My lord, this fair sky we see reminds me of your rare gift, wherein the blue of each oriel is of a like hue; but this natural roof above our heads lacketh at present the rich ornament of gold stars which stud your book."

Then to my Lord of Worcester, who hath been a pilgrim to the Holy Land, from whence he brought curious manuscripts to Oxford, she addressed this speech :

"My lord, you kiss our hand; methinks we should kiss your feet, which have touched the soil which Christ our Lord did tread on.


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As we cannot follow your example and become pilgrims to God's sepulchre, we will leastways crave such a recital of your pious travel as shall move us to a devout envy. I have been told that Oxford owes precious treasures of Eastern lore to your munificence."

"Not one half so indebted is Oxford to me, madame," the Earl replied, "as to others now in your presence. My Lord of Gloucester hath endowed that seat of learning with not less than 264 volumes."

"Ah! a right royal gift," said the Queen; but on her face I saw a cloud rising, and without any compliment to the Duke, who was about to address her, she turned to Master Waynfleet, the Provost of Eton :

"Your name, Monsieur, is so often on the King's lips—from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (this she said in Latin)—"that if so evil a passion as jealousy should enter my heart, methinks you would be the object of it. When we visited Winton College, his majesty told me Master Waynfleet, its former master, was his most dearly beloved friend and helper in all things. This title I



will no longer suffer your reverence to enjoy, or we shall be foes."

This was said with a playful smile, and in a truly gracious fashion. The holy man to whom these words were addressed, thus answered:

"I pray God, madame, his majesty shall find in your grace so great comfort that he shall never need any other for his worldly honour or his soul's health."

"But we both do need the friendship and aid of those who love us," the Queen replied, glancing round the circle which encompassed them, and fixing her dark orbs in turn on each person present; with almost filial affection on the Cardinal, with engaging confidence on the lords which she counted to be her friends, with a gracious winningness on those she had a scanty knowledge of, and with a defying lightning-like flash, which I have never seen in any eyes but hers, on the Duke of Gloucester's countenance, which had waxed each moment more lowering since her abrupt turning from him to Master Waynfleet. Whilst she looked at him she added these words to her speech, in a voice loud enough, I think,

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for him to hear, "Yea, of those who love us against those which hate us."

God save the Queen from making enemies! Even this Duke might be won to a liking for her, so matchless are her attractions, if she displayed not her girlish rancour unrestrainedly; lavishing in his presence marks of favour on his foes, not so much apparently to honour them as to goad him to anger. Like others, he had worn a daisy that day; but I saw him before long remove it from his breast, and, casting it on the floor, set his foot on it.

As the royal train advanced towards the church, the Queen said to the King, "Sire, which is most dear to you—Oxford, or this new college?"

"Sweet wife," the King replied, "Oxford is my mother, at whose breasts I sucked learning under the nursing care of his Eminence my dear uncle, and his Grace of Bath and Wells" (the King turned to the two prelates with a grateful smile). "But Eton," he added, "is my child, whom I in turn nourish with the wholesome furnishing of devout instructions and profitable teaching."

"What did my lord of Warwick, the brave

Lord Beauchamp, learn you, sire?" said the Queen.

"Endurance under heavy chastisement, sweetheart," answered the King, smiling. "His loyalty was evinced by many a severe lashing; loathed at the time, but now gratefully remembered. God rest his noble soul!"

The Queen sighed somewhat impatiently, I thought, and then said, "And when thought you first, sire, of building this church and college?"


"Before I was eighteen," replied the King. "At the commencement of my riper years, when I took in hand the government of both my kingdoms, I diligently considered after what fashion or by what kingly gift I might do fitting honour to Our Lady, so that the great Head of the Church, her Son, might therein be pleased; and whilst I thought of these things with inward meditation, it became fixed in my heart to found this college."

"It was a great and good thought, sire," quoth the Queen, as they went into the church, the beauty of which, albeit unfinished, ravishes the eyes and draws the soul towards God. The orient colour and painted imagery of the win-

dows, which are the work of the cunning artists of Southwark; the vaulted roof and the quaint carvings, the many altars, the fair stone image of Blessed Mary, the scutcheon of arms emblazoned everywhere with three silver lilies on sable ground, betokening constancy and purity, attracted the Queen's notice and moved her to admiration.

Before they left the church their majesties offered an alms for the support of the college buildings, and the expulsion of infidels, whereby those which visit Our Lady of Eton may gain an indulgence. Then issuing from the church, they visited the large hall for reading and disputation, the goodly devised conduits in the midst of the quadrangle; and nothing would serve the King but to conduct the Queen also to the pantry and buttery, the bakehouse and the breadhouse, and the square court for wood and other such-like stuff, which he had with his own thinking provided for his dear scholars' comfort.

"For I would have all things," he said, "edified of the most substantial and best abiding stuff that can be had, clean and in large form, setting apart superfluity of too



great curious works of entail and busy moulding."

At the collation, which was served in the college hall, talk was ministered of the great uses of this college; and the Bishop of Bath and Wells told the Queen how the King had laboured for them now many years to achieve this foundation, and spent many hours in the day and in the night in prayer on his knees, with sighs and tears, commending it to God; and ridden sundry times to Winton, there to confer with Master Waynfleet, and study the ordinances of the great Bishop Wykeham, and examine the boys one by one and the masters, till he had drawn up statutes for Eton.


The Queen said she liked well the device of the scutcheon everywhere to be seen on the walls, gates, and buttresses—a sable shield, with three fair silver lilies. She trusted that, like those of the knights in battle, it should ever excite these young students to most fair and valiant deeds.

"Yea," the Bishop replied, "if it please God, Eton shall always endure a memorial of the King's holy zeal. Its sable shield betokening endurance should move these young

scholars to send up by their holy living a perpetual sweet savour before angels and before men, and the white bright flower set there-upon engrave on their hearts the most fair image of Blessed Mary, their mother and mistress."

When the sun began to decline, their majesties descended to the playing-fields, where the scholars were making merry in honour of the King's bridal, and sundry sports were carried on, and boat-races not a few. A goodly company that evening assembled on the margin of the Thames, and joylity seemed to prevail in all hearts. But some of those about the Court were not of very good cheer, I ween; the Duke of Gloucester had craved leave to return to London, for news had reached him of an embassy from France.

"St. John !" the King exclaimed, after he had departed, " this toucheth thee nearly, sweet wife. I would these ambassadors had arrived in time to witness thy crowning and the grand tournament at Westminster; but an old Saxon proverb teacheth that 'better is late than never;' and so these envoys of thy father and uncle shall be most welcome; and mine uncle



of Gloucester will ordain that a meet reception be prepared for so worthy guests."

"Sire," quoth the Queen hastily, "his Eminence the Lord Cardinal, or the Duke of Somerset, or even my Lord Suffolk, should be more fitly charged with this duty. If you love me, sire, let not the Duke of Gloucester have the ordering of this matter."

I heard not the King's answer, but the contentment visible on the Queen's face betokened consent. To be refused what she desires and to be contented, is an impossible thing to her majesty. Lady Isabel Butler is no friend to the Queen. She notices each cloud on her brow; and if it be as small a one even as a man's hand, like that the prophet saw in time of drought, straightway she draws omens therefrom of gloomy import. I would she was banished from the Court; but her friends are so powerful, it should be a dangerous thing to warn the Queen against her. She was angered at Eton because the Queen called me to her side in the playing-fields to make a chain of daisies for the cap of little John de la Pole, the youngest of the Oppidans.

Then there gathered round the throne,

which had been erected for their majesties to witness the games, the sons of the noblemen and esquires which were known by name to the King—young Lord Robert de Hulme, Richard de la Warr, Simon Digby, Edward Beaufort, and many others. The Queen entertained herself by asking them questions, in not very good English always, but which, broken as it was, sounded pleasantly on her lips. Thus she catechised them. To one she said :

“ At what o'clock rise you, messire ? ”

“ At five in the morning, madame, the præpositor's 'Surgite' resounds in the dormitory.”

Then to another :

“ What prayers do you say ? ”

“ Before the time of the High Mass in the church we say the Lord's Prayer five times in the burial-ground or the cloister ; and after each prayer a decade of angelic salutations, with a Credo in confession of the Christian faith. We recite every day the whole Psalter of the Blessed Virgin.”

“ What ! fifteen Paters and one hundred  
 fifty Aves ? ”

“Yea, madame, unless we say the Little Office instead.”

“Have you made your first communion, my Lord Robert?”

“No, madame, but on next Holy Thursday I shall, if it please God, and watch the sepulchre that night.”

Then Master Digby said,

“The scholars which have been to communion sit at a table apart from the others, and have better fare that day, at the expense of the college.”

“Wherefore is it thus ordained?” the Queen asked.

“To honour those,” the boy quickly replied, “whom the Lord Himself hath honoured with a visit. They are also permitted to go and walk alone in the fields.”

“Indeed!” said the Queen; “and for what purpose?”

“To entertain themselves, I ween, with the great Guest they have received in their hearts,” was the ready answer. “On Easter Sunday morning we rise early to greet the day and see the sun rise.”

Then the Queen said to young Beaufort,



“Art thou a diligent scholar, Master Edward?”

“Madame,” the youth replied, “I have not once been flogged on Fridays for remissness in study ; and I have won this year the second prize for Latin verses on All Souls’ day.”

“What was the theme, I pray you?”

“The blessedness of souls which depart in the faith of Christ. On the Feast of St. John the Baptist I made a song and a picture, which was hung in the dormitory framed with green boughs. Master Waynfleet showed it to the King.”

“Can you speak Latin?”

“Yea, madame. For when the King cometh here he speaketh to all the boys he meets in Latin ; and if they answer well, his majesty pats them on the head and says, ‘Sitis boni pueri, mites et docibiles, et servi Domini.’ But I misdoubt, your majesty, being a woman, understands not Latin.”

“Nay, nay,” cried the Queen, laughing ; “Antoine de la Salle hath not so ill-tutored me, that I should lack a certain knowledge thereof. But methinks your life at Eton is

made up of prayers, Latin, and flogging; for naught else have you told me of."

"O, if your majesty careth for pastimes, she should come to Windsor Forest on a Holy Cross day, when we go out nutting; or on the Feast of St. Philip and St. James, when, if the weather be fair, we may rise at four and go and gather branches of May, so that we wet not our feet; and then we make the house odoriferous with green herbs, and adorn the windows with fair boughs. But mind you, madame, we must needs write verses before these playdays on the fertility of autumn, or the sweet vernal time of May."

"Gramercy for the information," said the Queen, smiling. "And how keep you carnival time?"

"O, on Shrove Tuesday the cook fastens a pancake to an old crow, which is the rarest pastime imaginable; and on St. Peter's day we have bonfires."

"Will your majesty come to Eton on the next Shrove Tuesday?" a little boy asked; at which the Queen laughed, and said she would, if the King pleased.

His majesty stood listening to this dis-

course with a pleased countenance, and he ended by calling to the foot of the throne some of the older students, which he presented to the Queen.

"These are the præpositors, madame," he said, "ordained by the provost to maintain order in the school. This is George Neville."

"What is your office, sir?" the Queen inquired.

"If it please your majesty, I keep watch in the dormitory."

"And thou, Anthony Woodville?" said the King.

"I in the school-hours," answered the boy.

"And thou, John Wenlock?" asked his majesty of a fair-haired youth of fifteen years of age.

"I am Moderator Aulæ," he replied, "and keep order in the refectory."

"And thou, Ralph Butler?"

"I inspect the face and hands of each scholar, as he enters, sire, to see they are clean."

"Ah, I commend this observance," exclaimed the Queen; "and I hope Eton College

will ever prove a school famous for clean hands."

"And pure hearts," subjoined the King. And then he called several of the collegers, and spoke kindly to them, which was at all times his wont; for I have often heard that if he meets any of the students in Windsor Castle, whither they sometimes go to visit his servants whom they know, on ascertaining whom they are, he admonishes them to follow the paths of virtue, and gives them money to win over their good-will.

When their majesties rose to depart, my little cousin William Paston came to my side, and whispered in mine ear; which the Queen observing, nothing would serve her but to learn what the youngster desired of me.

"An it please your majesty," I said, "he craveth that I do despatch to him a box of figs and raisins by the next barge from London, and to remind his brother John, when I see him, to send him eighteenpence wherewith to buy a pair of slippers."

The Queen smiled, and said Master Paston should have from her the largest box of fruit and the fairest slippers London could show,

as he was the kinsman of her sweet namesake—for so her goodness named her poor servant who writeth this.

The sun was setting when their majesties entered their barge. The sky was then more lovely than the earth; and the red crimson clouds beautified the river, which shone as if on fire with that reflected light. The King began to talk with the Queen in French, not knowing, or else not heeding, that I understood this language.

“Sweetheart,” he said, as the boat glided on the smooth water, “a river puts me always in mind of the voyage of life to the sea of eternity. Methinks our joint travel to that blissful ending is as like to be a happy one as any on earth.”

“Yea,” answered the Queen; “mutual love and the possession of one of the greatest thrones in the world promise happiness, if it is to be attained before Paradise is reached.”

“I could be happy with thee in any place where I could save my soul and do God’s will.”

“God’s will, sire, is undoubtedly that you should reign happily, and therefore firmly, in

this your fair kingdom. O, my very good lord, 'tis well to pray and to study ; 'tis well to build holy fanes and learned retreats ; for common men but one half of what you, sire, have already achieved would be sufficient for the glory of a lifetime. But the son of King Henry V., the crowned monarch of England and France, can never be satisfied with the praises of churchmen and the love of schoolboys."

"St. John ! sweet wife ! thou wouldest not have the war with France renewed, and the new bond of unity whereof thou art the link dissolved ?"

"Not now, sire, not now, when your treasure is exhausted, your council divided ; this is not the time to attack—"

"Thine uncle and mine, Marguerite ?"

"O, my lord, the dearest bond of kindred must be forgotten where the welfare of your subjects is concerned. Royalty has a special obligation akin to that which the Gospel speaks of when it bids those whom God calls in a special manner to hate father and mother, if needs be, for His sake. A king's sacre is, like the vow of religion, a solemn consecration. His subjects are his children ; his greatness

his country's greatness. He shall answer on the day of judgment to the Great Supreme King if in aught he hath unfaithfully discharged his high commission."

"God and St. John knoweth that from the day when on my seely brow in Paris the crown was placed, and the holy chrism flowed on my head, I have daily prayed to fulfil a king's duty, day by day examining my conscience in that regard. I would not wilfully wrong one creature on this earth, how much less my own people?"

"And yet, sweet king—"

"And yet what?"

"O, my lord, see you not that your most devoted friends, your more than father, the Lord Cardinal, the good Lord Suffolk, the gallant Somerset, are sacrificed to—"

"To whom, Marguerite? My favour hath been constantly shown to those good lords, who are indeed most deserving of it."

"Ah, but your grace banisheth not from your councils the Duke of Gloucester, their bitter foe—and mine."

"Thine! Hath my uncle dared—"

"O sire, he yieldeth outward homage to

your Queen—he weareth the daisy in his breast; but if looks do ever speak what the tongue dareth not to utter; if cutting speeches, expressive of hatred to Lord Suffolk for his share in your majesty's marriage; if fears confided to others that his dominion in this realm shall cease if your grace loves King Charles's niece; if insults daily renewed and studied injuries inflicted on the good Cardinal—newly increased since he hath showed parental goodness to my poor self—denote hatred, then my Lord of Gloucester's enmity to me is proved.”

“If I thought so—” the King said, greatly moved. “I have borne much from my uncle Gloucester. My childhood revered in him the appointed guardian of this realm; I displeased him in nothing, and studied his wishes. But as years advanced, his ambitious, worldly, and not very religious spirit often grieved me. O, I have suffered, yea, wept over the exhibitions of his hatred to the Cardinal, my most generous, kind, and loving father in God. Often have I been from one to the other in years past, and with tears besought them to be reconciled, and not wound my heart by their divisions. Both wish me well, I ween. But




if the Duke of Gloucester shows himself to be *thy* foe—”

“My lord and husband,” quoth the Queen, “I will submit to your guidance. If your majesty desires that I should turn a deaf ear to the Cardinal’s counsels, and my back on Lord Suffolk, who hath been my very good friend for so long a time, and be ruled by my Lord of Gloucester, then I will obey your grace, and so, it may be, obtain his friendship.”

“St. John forbid !” the King hastily cried. “The Lord Cardinal, and all who bear the name of Beaufort, are our true friends. But naught will I do against the Duke of Gloucester till it is proved to me he is false. He cannot pardon his wife’s shame and sufferings, and his temper since those sad haps hath grown stern and morose. God forgive those who dealt hardly with the accused, if aught moved them thereunto besides loyalty and justice. I would give the collar of St. George, and every jewel I yet possess, that that trial had not taken place, and the Duchess’s two associates had not perished.”

“Yet if they practised against your majesty’s life they were righteously condemned.”



“God knoweth! I often pray for their souls, and I would my uncle’s wife had not been put to open shame in this realm. Yet if she was guilty, the sentence was a just one; for royalty should not shield Christians from open penance when they have sinned. If—which God forbid—I should commit an offence which gave open scandal, I would go to St. Paul’s Church as a penitent in the eyes of all the people.”

“God forbid!” echoed the Queen. I fear she thought then of the penance at least as much as of the sin.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CLOUDS AT HOME AND ABROAD.

THE Queen came into my chamber where I was writing in this book; and as I stood up, she said, "Prithee rise not from thy good task, which it liketh me well to see thee prosecute. If thou art a faithful chronicler, thou wilt set down that this year hath been the happiest I have yet known—great thanks to St. John, as my dear king would say. Hast thou described the day we went to Eton for the first time?"

"Yea, madame."

"And hast thou made mention of the reception of the French ambassadors on the 16th of July, and that the King told M. de Presigny that he did not hold them to be strangers, inasmuch that they belonged to the household of his uncle of France, whom of all persons in the world, after me his wife, he loved the best, and that he desired the continuance of peace

beyond anything on earth; and that they all said 'Amen'?"

"Yea, madame; and I have likewise related how the King was seated in a very high chair of state, covered with tapestry of blue diaper, and dressed in a long robe of vermillion cloth-of-gold."

"O, I'll warrant thee, good Meg," the Queen said laughing, "to record these details. I doubt not thou hast indifferently well described the hangings of gold of Damascus newly purchased by the Cardinal for my state chamber in his house at Waltham Forest, and the various costly furniture of my lodgings at Eltham, and Kew, and Windsor, not to speak of the Tower and this Palace of Westminster; but I often wish we were less magnificently lodged, and had more gold in our exchequer; for William Clive, the clerk of the works, says he has no money to pay the poor labourers their weekly wage, and has the utmost pain and difficulty to provide for them. If the Lord Cardinal was less generous, the King would have been, ay, and would still be, in exceeding great embarrassment. But, God be praised, his Eminence is as bountiful as he is rich."

“ Ah, madame,” I said, “ his riches are often thrown in the teeth of his friends, as if it should be an unbecoming thing for a prelate to have so great wealth.”

The Queen replied, “ This great and good man is the most misjudged person in the world ; for, I pray you, is it on himself he spends his wealth ? Is not his own fare and his couch those of a poor man in the midst of his splendour ? Doth he refuse at any time an alms to the poor ? Doth he not adorn churches and found monasteries with his wealth ? Doth he not assist the King in his necessities with a princely generosity ? If he had not amassed gold, where, I pray you, would means have been found to save the dignity of the crown, to reward loyal services, to pension poor servitors ? Ah, the greedy cormorants, the selfish spendthrifts ! the King’s false friends cry out against this our most loved friend and uncle ; for they would fain clutch themselves what he holds but in trust for his King, for the poor, for the Church ! The Duke of Gloucester would fain have kept the King in poverty ; for then he would have ruled more absolutely in his stead, and abused his gentle nature by a

rougher tyranny. I have no patience with that Duke. Each day yields to me some new knowledge of his old enmity to the Lord Cardinal, and his present one to me. He rivals the King in his people's affections; he displays opposite qualities to his. He maligns me in the minds of men. My happiness is great beyond my hopes; for when was a wife more supremely blessed by a husband's love, or a queen more esteemed by her consort, than I am, or blessed with more true friends? But the fabric of my joys would soon totter and fall if this Duke had his will. He burns with resentment that one of my young years thwarts his policy, checks his purposes, and humbles his pride. But not one inch will I yield to him; and his arrogant soul shall stoop to sue for pardon to the Lord Cardinal before this year is ended. Lady Suffolk and I often declare that should be the most happy day we could see."

"Madame and dear mistress," I said, "if your goodness will suffer me to speak truly, I would fain conjure you to moderate the excess of your animosity against the Duke of Gloucester. God knoweth none of my kindred

love the Duke ; but he is powerful,—a favourite with the people.”

“Therefore I hate him,” exclaimed the Queen. “O, think you not, dear Meg, I perceive his cunning and the shrewd manner with which he throws the King in the shade ? Whilst my lord Henry prays and reads, or rules his little kingdom of scholars at Eton, the Duke rides through London with a martial aspect and haughty carriage, which pleases the common people ; and the cry, ‘Long live the Duke of Gloucester !’ reëchoes in the streets and pollutes the air I breathe, for I loathe his very name.”

“No sovereign is more beloved,” I said, “than the King.”

“I know it,” the Queen replied. “And who should be more justly loved than he ? Think you I worship not his holy virtues ? the more reverently, I ween, because they are foreign to mine own too ardent nature. Heavens ! is there on this earth a more saintly spirit, a more God-fearing prince, than King Henry ? Those to whom his soul hath been an open book since the days of his infancy aver that no grave sin ever sullied his conscience. Like

unto a pure lake which reflects no shadows, his mind receives no taint from evil examples; nor does an imperfect word escape his lips. And yet they are true words which the Cardinal said to me the last time I conversed with him alone at Waltham Forest. 'My niece, your husband has the virtues of a saint, and almost the nature of an angel; but the cunning which in these turbulent days is needful for a king he wholly lacks. Be it yours, to whom God hath given a manly understanding in a feminine garb, to supply this want, and to guard this saintly soul from the perils which excess of goodness conjures around you. On the stormy sea whereon you are embarked, be henceforward the pilot, and in your young hands take the helm which my aged ones must resign.' This is a solemn charge—the fate, the reign, the glory of the King committed to my inexperience! I must needs despair, if I possessed not devoted friends and counsellors with more of the world's knowledge than one of my sex and years can have attained. But Somerset, Suffolk, and Shrewsbury have sufficient wisdom and bravery to continue the Cardinal's long struggle with Gloucester, even if



the Duke of York and the young Earl of Warwick espouse his interests."

Then the Queen left me, and I mused sorrowfully on her words; for I fear me the Lord Cardinal will no more come to court, and is not like to live long—leastways this is the common report. He is shut up in his palace at Wolseley, and wholly given up to devout exercises, preparing for death. When he departs this life, alas! who shall counsel the Queen?

I have received a letter from Jeanne de Kersabiec, who was my bedchamber companion at Havering Bower, the contents of which have disturbed me not a little. After the death of the Queen Joan, our mistress, she returned to Brittany, and entered the household of her cousin, Madame Catherine de Rohan, wife of Messire Jacques de Dinant, the most wealthy lord in that province. She often writes to me, and absence hath noways diminished an affection which began when we were both little damsels and playmates of Monseigneur Gilles de Bretagne. I know not which loved him the most. When he was about ten years old he used to laugh at my English gravity and her French

vivacity, and to call me "*Jean qui pleure*," and her "*Jean qui rit*." When he was a little older, he likened Jeanne to a sunny day, and me to a moonlight night. But I think we were more like unto two little planets revolving round one sun; for we had no brothers, and the affection young girls are accustomed to bestow on near relatives and close companions in childhood was wholly centred on this young prince. When we were alone together all our talk was of Monseigneur Gilles. We learnt little songs to please him when he came to Havering Bower. We decked his chamber with odoriferous herbs, and mingled thyme and lavender with the rushes on the floor. When he went hawking, Jeanne rode with him, and I sat by his side when he conned his lessons. If he was chastised, we both wept and offered to suffer in his place, and we loved one another the more because we both loved him so well. When afterwards he lived with the King at Windsor, only to hear his name or see it written was the greatest joy on earth to Jeanne and me. If one of us was in London, and only so much as once beheld him riding in the street, she forthwith wrote to the other how he was

dressed, and the colour of his horse, and what favours he wore, and this would furnish a whole week's entertainment. A short time before his grandam's death he came to Havering Bower, and this was the last time we three were together, which had been so long play-mates and friends. It was in September, and very hot for the time of year; too hot, monseigneur thought, to shoot; but I knew this was an excuse, and that he liked best to sit in the shade in the garden and converse. It put him in mind, he said, of past pleasant days, and "God knoweth," he added, "if in England we shall meet again." He took off his bonnet, and I fastened to it a piece of jessamine, which led him to discourse on flowers and their meanings. Poesy was always his delight, and when he repeated verses, his voice made the most indifferent lines sound musical. He asked Jeanne to sing with him one of the *Noëls* which the peasants in Brittany go about singing on Christmas nights. This air has a mournful cadence, which strangely tickles the ear. They had learnt it from their nurses, and in old years the Queen Joan often asked to hear it. When Jeanne had finished

the last verse, and their joint voices sank in the dwindling final note, she sighed, and he said: "Ah, Jeanne! you are not '*Jean qui rit*' to-day."

This made her laugh, but the laugh ended in tears; only she hid her face in her kerchief, that he should not see she wept. We often disputed after that day which of us was the most like often to see Monseigneur Gilles again.

"Of a surety you," Jeanne said; "for when the queen dies, and I go to Dinant to my cousin, I leave you to judge how like I shall then be to see the prince."

"Yea," I answered, "you will meet him at the duke's court, whither he must one day return, and then you will speak together of England and poor Margaret de Roos."

This which I predicted may yet happen; for Jeanne is so great a favourite with Madame de Dinant that she parts not one day from her if she can help it, and has often carried her to Vannes; and this year to Guincamp, the castle of Monseigneur Pierre de Bretagne and Madame Françoise d'Amboise his wife; and this letter which I transcribe is partly written from that place:

*Mademoiselle Jeanne de Kersabiec to the Lady  
Margaret de Roos.*

“The Castle of Guincamp, 1446.

“SWEET MARGARET,—A merchant of Vannes who goes to Cherbourg will take this letter to a ship-master, who will send it to London. My entirely beloved friend, among all earthly creatures I love you most; and to converse with you in this wise is the greatest pleasure I can enjoy, since our sorrowful parting, seven years ago, after the silent and fearful conclusion of our queen’s long and grievous malady. Ah, how truly does her epitaph describe her as the joy of your land and the brightness of our own! But it is not of the dead but of the living I would now speak. My heart often reverts to England; but here, as you well know, new affections have arisen, which link themselves with those old ones by a thousand ties. Mostly dear to me is the little Françoise, my special charge and daily care. She is the most gracious creature in the world; and when she sits on the knees of her godmother Madame Françoise d’Amboise, you would think you saw St. Ann with the Blessed Mary on her lap.

“Heavens! how sweet and pleasant a home is this castle of Guincamp, and what rare lessons of virtue are here to be learned! Devotion excludes not joylity, nor piety wholesome diversions. A noble society of knights and ladies assemble here every day, of the most commendable in the neighbourhood. Whilst Monseigneur Pierre and his companions shoot and hunt, Madame Françoise with their wives and daughters sits spinning fine wool and making garments for the poor; and never so much as one wanton or malicious word is uttered in her presence. Then when the sun is setting, and the time approaches for her lord's return, the noble lady goes to the Porte de Rennes, and there sits on a stone bench under the wall of the tower awaiting his coming. This seat is her audience-chamber. Thither flock the rich and the poor, nobles, artisans, and serfs,—all which have need of aid, counsel, or tenderness, and desire the sweet comfort of her benign words and gracious charity. This princess's good actions are so numerous, that time would fail if I tried to record them. The good Duchess Jeanne bequeathed naught to her when she died, except the beads, made of

wood, of the holy man Vincent Ferrier. This heritage hath already prospered in her hands, and many, young as she is, hold her to be a saint."

"Dinant, February 5th.

"This letter, which I began to write three days ago to my well-beloved friend, I now continue in great trouble and sore grief. Alas! God our Lord hath suffered a mighty affliction to befall my poor cousin Madame Catherine. Tidings have reached her of the mortal, 'tis to be feared, sickness of Messire Jacques her husband. She is all unfit to endure this great and sudden woe, for she never had much wit or courage, and she returned to Dinant almost beside herself with grief. All the way on horseback she lamented loudly her hard fate, and her tears fell like an abundant rain. 'Ah me!' she kept crying, 'what shall become of a hapless widow?' and with great demonstrations of grief tore her hair, and chid her little daughter if she said one word all the day.

"The end hath come. Messire Jacques is dead. God rest his soul! and from the paradise where soon it will ascend, may he watch over his child, which now slumbers by my side!

Ah, poor unwitting damsel, thou art now the most richly dowered maid in all Brittany, and peradventure in all France. No king's daughter now living will bring a husband so many towns and lands and money. Good Margaret, this leads me to seek thine aid in a weighty matter, wherein prudence is much needed. My cousin is almost distracted with the fear of a hap which would be to her the most grievous of all sorrows, and a disgrace to the houses of Dinant and Rohan. I have before this spoken in some of my letters of the duke's favourite, young Arthur de Montauban, than which there exists not one man in the whole world, I think, of more consummate art and more desperate wickedness. His greed for riches knows no limits; nor are there any bounds, I fear, to his influence over his master. If this hawk should pounce on our dove,—and that he hovers with evil intent over her nest is too evident,—God shield her; for no lesser power than His shall save her from his clutches. One human hope alone I can discern. If a noble eaglet bars his approach and rescues this innocent prey, the arch deceiver may yet be foiled. Monseigneur Pierre conversed a few days before his death



with Messire Jacques, and spoke of the ill usage our Monseigneur Gilles has experienced from his brother the duke. The poor inheritance bequeathed to him, the domains of Ingrande and Chantocé, are contested by the King of France ; and he is the poorest prince in Europe, who, if justice existed, would be one of the richest. Monseigneur Pierre said he would fain see him retrieve his fortunes by marriage, or in any other lawful manner. Whereupon Messire Jacques straightway offered his daughter's hand to the prince for his brother, who with gracious words thanked him, and gave him many assurances that no marriage would be so agreeable to his wife and himself as the one he proposed, and that he would broach the matter to the duke. Since her husband's death, my cousin has secretly written to the Prince Pierre on this subject ; and in his answer he says that his liking for this match is as great as ever, but that from some words of his brother the Duke Francis, he perceives him to be wholly averse to it, which is not credible, except the arts of his favourite have poisoned his mind towards his brother. If Monseigneur

Gilles was here, then methinks Monseigneur Pierre would certainly befriend him, and the Constable de Richemont also. If through the Queen of England, or by direct communication with the prince himself, thou canst move him, good Margaret, to come here without delay, there shall be hopes of a happy issue. In his absence naught can be effected. The noblest love on earth is that which forgets its own desires and private joys, and only cares for the honour and the happiness of the object of its affections. Bethink thee, dear friend, how we were wont of yore to plan little surprises for monseigneur. I saved sometimes the fruit which fell to my share, and laid it on green leaves in his favourite bower, to regale him. And thou didst often write his lessons for him to copy at night, when he returned from the chase, and had no mind to con them himself. Now that time has lapsed, other self-denying proofs of affection are required. This fair little maiden, whom I school in pleasant knowledge and sweet behaviour, shall, if it please God, become his wife and enjoy his love. And if by thy means he is informed of this good fortune which awaits him if he is bold and active,

thou mayst indeed forego his pleasant society ; but how much dearer shall be the thought that he is happy, and partly by thy help ! Procure, then, he uses no delays. Let not the love of English friends mar so great a good. Madame de Dinant is passionately bent on this alliance ; but she is the most timid person in the world ; and if time is allowed to Arthur de Montauban to mature his schemes, God help her and the little Françoise.—Thy humble loving friend,  
“JEANNE DE KERSABIEC.”

My God, my God ! is mine a selfish love, or doth some dark presentiment oppress my soul ? I would this letter had never reached my hands.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### FRANÇOISE DE DINANT.

IN the evening I met Monseigneur Gilles in the Queen's withdrawing-room. (No cousins can love each other more than the King Henry and this prince, albeit their dispositions are very dissimilar.) As soon as he heard what Jeanne had written to me, his resolve was formed; he would go at once to Dinant.

For some time past I had observed that he was consumed by the desire to return to Brittany; and the injustice of his brother, who refused to repair the losses he had sustained from the King of France's dishonesty, and left him without any heritage, increased that desire. For he knew his uncle, the valiant Arthur de Richemont, loved him tenderly, and the people regarded him with no common affection.

"Too long, too long," he said, "I have been absent. Monseigneur my brother would

have done me justice if I could have had speech with him. As to Arthur de Montauban, he is a caitiff, whom every virtuous person abhors. God knoweth, it is not the enmity only he bears me which moves me to oppose that man. From childhood he has been an evil spirit at the duke's side. His mother was a Visconti, and from her he inherits the crafty, lying, seducing spirit of that race. Francis never committed a fault but this childish companion applauded it. He had never a virtuous intent but with infernal art he nipped it in the bud. With the face of an angel, he has the vices of a demon ; and since the ducal crown has rested on his master's brow, he has surrounded him with associates which are his own creatures. He distils poison in his mind against his kindred, and chiefly against me ; and the poison is so disguised that its effects alone are visible. Pleasures he hath a marvellous skill in inventing ; piety he scoffs at. The court of Vannes, once the most devout in Europe, groweth every day more licentious, and the sovereign more despised by a God-fearing people, the like of which doth not exist for loyalty, tempered by a generous freedom of soul.

This message from the good demoiselle Jeanne confirms my resolve to return to Brittany, and the new hope it suggests I will not blight by unwholesome delays. The swiftest horse that can carry me to the coast, and the best sailing-vessel in which to cross the sea, shall now be my best helpers. I would be at Dinant before the duke or his favourite intercept my coming. Thou wilt pray for me, sweet Marguerite?"

"Yea, monseigneur," I replied. And then, fearing he should rise, for I knew that I should never see him any more after that night, I added: "May God prosper your suit, and give you comfort in future years!"

He answered rather my thinking than my words when he said:

"Catherine de Rohan, her mother, is in greater repute of beauty than any lady in Brittany, and famed likewise for virtue; and Messire Jacques de Dinant was the most valiant and honourable lord of the whole province, except my uncle the Connétable."

"You will see Jeanne," I said; thinking I would fain be Jeanne, who would now enjoy the sight of him whom I should never more set eyes on.

“Good Jeanne !” he answered. “Our winsome *Jean qui rit*. By St. Ann, Madame Marguerite, those were happy days at Havering Bower, and I shall never forget them. You and Jeanne are my very good friends. Ah, do not weep, Marguerite.”

“*Jean qui pleure* was my name,” I said, trying to smile through my tears.

“Prithee do not weep,” he again kindly said.

“*Je n’en peut mais*,” I answered, as he had taught us to do in our childish sports.

Then he kissed my hand, and said, “Adieu, Marguerite.”

That night he took leave of the King and Queen; who parted with him with exceeding great grief. But what grief was like unto mine?

Monseigneur once told me that when he was about to be born, the duchess his mother said to the holy man Vincent Ferrier, “I beseech your reverence to pray that this my infant may live to be baptised.” Whereupon the good saint (for such he was held to be) made the sign of the cross upon her, and answered: “Content thee, my daughter. This

child shall live to be baptised, and moreover be a martyr." Alas, this prediction doth haunt me. He added that his mother was wont to remind him of it, when his passionate and vehement nature showed itself in childhood. 'Ah, sweet son," she would say; "I ween that through much tribulation thou shalt reach heaven, if God does thee that good at the last; and so the holy man's words shall be fulfilled."

The days went by, and each that passed without tidings of his arrival at Dinant seemed long and heavy to me. At last I received this packet from Jeanne by the same hand as before, and these were its contents:

"MY ENTIRELY BELOVED FRIEND,—What hath happened is so singular and so sudden, it involves so great fears and so great hopes, doubts and contentment mingled with uneasiness,—that I can ill describe the various emotions I have experienced, nor in my own thinking resolve which of these sentiments most prevail in me at this time. That which I most desired has come to pass, but in such wise as I should indeed not have desired. I would not undo



what is done, yet would fain it had not been done. I rejoice in trembling; I grieve, and yet am glad. But no longer will I keep thee in suspense, but plainly, and as shortly as I can, relate the haps of the last days which have worked in me these manifold and opposed sentiments.

Tuesday last week Dame Catherine sent for me, which she does often in the day, and always when anything disturbs her more than usual. She is the most dependent person on others that can be conceived—a very weather-cock for changeableness, yet stubborn in her bent sometimes. I found her much vexed by a letter she had received from the Duke of Brittany, which expressed a hope—from a sovereign, it read like a command—that the hand of her daughter should be speedily bestowed on the Count Arthur de Montauban, than which a more honourable gentleman and leal subject did not exist. And that this marriage of the sole child of his well-beloved Messire Jacques de Dinant to one which he likewise held as one of his dearest friends would yield him so great contentment, that nothing should exceed the favour he would

show to the count and his young wife. And much more in that strain.

“Jeanne, what shall I do?” quoth Madame Catherine. “Here is the duke resolved on this contract. I shall die if Françoise must espouse this man, which her father misliked more than any other person in the world; but if the duke and he are determined to compass it, what can I do?”

Then she began to weep and wring her hands in a piteous manner. The sight of great bursts of grief doth not work in me the compassion which some feel at these explosions. Over-softness in others works in me a singular hardness and excess of passion, a notable coldness; and my cousin's lamentations, howsoever well founded, awaken in me—I cry mercy for it!—a greater resentment of her folly than pity for her grief. This uncharitableness is, I know, very wicked; but there are persons which seem created to tempt others to this sin; and if this was the end of Madame de Rohan's coming into the world, she hath then fulfilled her destiny as far as I am concerned.

When she had bewailed herself for some time, and cried out that she was the most

miserable person in the whole world, and asked many times what she should do, yet never listened to an answer, I at last said, in the deliberate manner which commands a hearing, "Madame, you must needs act with courage : call to your aid the Connétable de Richemont ; advise with Monseigneur Pierre and his holy consort. If it must be so, appeal to the Estates of Brittany and the King of France ; but never yield an inch on a point wherein the weal of your child and your own honour are concerned."

But, alas, all the blowing in the world cannot elicit a spark of fire from damp wood ; nor can any stirring evoke an effort of courage from a timid soul. I had as lief deal with lewd persons as with those in whom virtue hath no strength. Catherine de Rohan's merits are like the wheat which grows on the rock ; fair for a while, but lacking the depth of soil which furnishes endurance when the heat of trial arises. She loves to be compassionated. She must needs be always caressed. Her blue eyes solicit pity—her tears flow in graceful showers. She was a fair and useless ornament in a brave man's home ; but now its prop hath

fallen, what stay shall she afford that house? Averse to yield, but afraid to oppose the duke, she spent two days in vain complaints; on the third the paper was spread before her, and she held her pen musingly, unresolved yet what to write, though she had kept the duke's messenger waiting two whole days and nights! Then she said she should go to Vannes to see him; that her tears would move him to desist from his request.

"Yea," I replied somewhat angrily, for I knew if she went what the upshot would be, — "yea, go to see him, and on the morrow Françoise will be betrothed to the miscreant whom Messire Jacques would have slain if he had dared only to think on her."

O, what an injured countenance she then assumed, exceedingly meek and pitiful, and cried that I little knew a mother's heart, which, when her child is concerned, will face a lion or a tiger!

"A painted lion," I answered, "or a caged tiger at a fair." These were, I know, unkind words; but, i'faith, I could not restrain them. It made me mad to hear her utter these fine speeches, and to see the while she had not

more courage wherewith to defend her daughter than a mouse or a hare.

Whilst we were thus disputing, she with querulous complaints, and I with angry reproaches, of a sudden we heard the sound of horses' feet in the court beneath the windows; and as I was going to look what this arrival should be, Françoise ran into the chamber, and said,

“Madame maman, a beau sire, on a fine black horse, hath come to the front door. Who is he?”

There followed a brief suspense, during which a cold fear seized me. It is Arthur de Montauban, I thought, or it may be the duke to plead the cause of his favourite, and then all is lost. But when the constable of the castle announced Monseigneur Gilles de Bretagne, I was as near fainting as I ever was in my life, the surprise and joy was so sudden.

“Ah, monseigneur, you are very welcome,” Madame Catherine exclaimed, with one of her most sweet looks.

Mademoiselle de Dinant—Heaven bless her!—put out her little hand when he turned towards her, expecting he would kiss it, as

many are wont to do. But kneeling before her, he said to her mother, "Do you permit me to embrace my little cousin, madame?"

"Yea, monseigneur, you will greatly honour her," Madame Catherine replied.

Upon which he kisses Mademoiselle Françoise on both the cheeks; and she, as if she had conceived a sudden liking for the prince, threw her little arms round his neck, and kept him a while stooping to her height. Then rising, he took her by the hand (she nothing loth) and led her to her mother.

"You grant her to me?" he said, with his bewitching smile. "She is mine from this day forward?"

Madame Catherine did not gainsay him, but called him her fair son, and showed great contentment at his coming and at his suit.

Then the prince said, looking at me, "Is that my good friend Jeanne?" and greeted me as a sister. His visage is but little altered, and his heart not at all, since the days that we were all at Havering Bower.

By her mother's orders I led the little damoiselle into the garden, which stands, thou must know, between the palace and the court,

which in its turn opens by one gate upon the town, and by the other on the open fields towards Rennes.

For an hour or more monseigneur conversed with Madame Catherine. When he came out his brow was clouded, and his aspect changed.

"O beau sire," Françoise exclaimed, "see, they have led your horse to the gate. Let me ride with you once round the court, as I was wont to do with Messire Jacques, my good father."

"Yea, Mademoiselle Françoise," the prince replied, "so you shall, if it please you. But will you not be so gracious as first to gather for me a posy of yon sweet flowers to carry to my lady-love?"

The little damsel pouted her pretty lips, and said, "I will be your lady-love, and none other shall you have."

"So you shall, Ma Mie," he answered smiling. "You are my lady-love, and none other shall I have."

"Then," she cried, clapping her hands, "I will gather for you the most fair posy can be seen."

And like a butterfly she flew from one bush to another collecting roses.

Then monseigneur said to me, "The noble lady yonder, Jeanne, will she match in cunning Arthur de Montauban?"

"Nay, monseigneur; nor even one of his pigeons, I ween."

"Hath she the virtue of courage, or the courage of virtue?"

"Neither one nor the other. She cannot so much as conceive what courage signifies."

"But will not her love for her child furnish her with it when it comes to a struggle?"

"Monseigneur, in weak natures love partakes of the general feebleness."

"Does she verily detest Arthur de Montauban?"

"Her hatred is real, but persistency even in hatred implies some kind of strength."

"She says she desires above all things a contract of marriage betwixt her daughter and me. Is this true?"

"Yea, true as the gospel at this time. More true to-day than it was yesterday, or than it shall be to-morrow, if your grace is out



of sight. If she sees the duke and his minion, it may soon not be true at all."

"If an event is accomplished, will she long lament it?"

"Not long, unless she lacks a theme for lamentation; and then any hap will furnish it."

The prince sat down, and on his countenance anxious expressions flitted like clouds on a sunny sky. He held his head in his hands, then walked to and fro in a restless manner, his eyes glancing now towards the court, now over the fields which lie behind the palace, now on Françoise, as she wandered about the garden; and I marvel not that he should have gazed on the little damoiselle with pleasure and admiration. She is the most lovely child imaginable; her complexion fair and delicate, her eyes blue, but of a more dark blue than her mother's. Each vein in her temples is visible through the transparent whiteness of her skin. Her slender neck is most graceful, and her hair of the most beautiful golden hue that can be thought of. The parterre rang with her sweet laughter the while she was gathering flowers and conversing with herself

half in speech and half in song ; and when holding up her kirtle full of roses with both her hands, her cheeks flushed with running and her eyes beaming with joy, she came to us, I heard Monseigneur Gilles say in a loud voice, speaking between his teeth,

“No, forsooth and forsooth, this angel shall never belong to that caitiff !”

“Beau sire,” the little maiden said, “I would that these roses would change into bread in my lap, like it happened to the good Madame Ste. Elisabeth, for then I would feed your black horse when he has carried us round the court.”

“You are not afraid to ride with me, Mademoiselle Françoise ?” the prince said.

“No, no, beau sire,” she cried, “if you will hold me fast with one arm, as my father used to do.”

“Never fear, petite madame,” he answered, “I will hold thee fast, and never let thee go.”

I was half afraid to let her ride, and urged she should not trouble monseigneur ; but neither he nor she would listen to me : she clung to his hand, jumping as they walked

along. When we reached the gate, the constable of the castle was standing by the side of the prince's horse.

"Bon ami, I am going to ride," Françoise cried.

He shook his head, and said mademoiselle was too bold; but when Monseigneur Gilles was in the saddle, she stamped her foot and cried, "Lift me up to ride."

Then M. de Maulévrier placed her upon the horse before the prince, and all the roses she held in her hand fell to the ground. She exclaimed, "O, my roses!"

I stooped to pick them up. The next instant I heard her say, "Hold me fast, beau sire." I looked up, and saw Messire Gilles dash his spurs into his steed, and then like a flash of lightning pass through the portal out of the court.

In the presence of the old constable, the esquires, and serving men, and of me who stood rooted to the ground in speechless fear and amazement, he had carried off Françoise. I heard her mother scream—a rushing of persons to and fro, loud cries of alarm, and could not move, I was so wildered with this hap. No

one, I ween, knew what to say or do, and least of all Madame Catherine. She was too much consternated to think of any fine speech then.

“Whither hath he carried her?” she kept crying. “What hath he done with my François? You said he would befriend me, and he plays the part of a cruel enemy. He robs me of my child. Bid them pursue that wicked man. Where is the constable?”

“Madame,” I said, “be calm;” but mine own heart beat so fast that I almost lacked the ability to speak. “Here is the constable to take your orders. Reassure him, I pray you. Tell your household . . . .” I stopped bewildered, for verily I knew not what to advise.

“Speak to them, Jeanne,” she cried, pointing to the attendants, who stood aghast, waiting for a sign of her will. I saw she was like to faint; so I collected my thoughts and said, “Good friends, the prince hath committed an unwarrantable action, but with no dishonourable intent, as you will, I doubt not, soon perceive. Your lady, Madame Catherine, promised this day to Monsieur Gilles the hand of Mademoiselle de Dinant.”

“Nay, Jeanne !” my cousin exclaimed.

“Nay, madame,” I interrupted ; “I hold him not therefore excused.”

“We are losing time,” old Armand de Maulévrier cried, his pale visage flushing with indignant resentment ; “whither shall we ride, mesdames ? to Rennes, or to the coast ?”

In sooth we could not tell ; and at the mention of the coast, Madame de Rohan shrieked, and cried she should die if her daughter was carried beyond seas. The constable rode out with the garrison of Dinant, and scoured the country ; but no tidings could be heard of the prince and the child, except that some peasants had seen one riding like the wind plunge into the forest behind the town, after which all clue to them was lost. The greatest fear she entertained was that Monseigneur Gilles should have carried Françoise to England, which she would have it was a barbarous country. Verily my disquiet equalled hers, for I apprehended many terrible results should ensue from so rash an action. It pierced my heart with a twofold anguish to hear this poor creature bemoan herself, and accuse the prince of cruelty and horrible craft

in robbing her of her child, which he verily had done, albeit with no evil intent I felt assured; and of this I tried to persuade her. But she would take no comfort from anything I said; until on the morrow a messenger came from the castle of Gualdo with a letter addressed to "Haute et puissante dame Catherine de Rohan, the well-beloved mother of my most entirely loved wife Françoise de Dinant." This was what the prince wrote; and the while I transcribe his words I marvel that one so good and God-fearing, and of so tender a heart, should have done so great a wrong as this to steal a child from her mother; albeit I conceive some excuse can be found in the suddenness of the act, and the fear he had that through weakness Madame Catherine should ruin his designs and her own, to the no small injury of them all. Be that as it may, this was his letter:

The Castle of Gualdo, 11th of January 1445.

MADAME AND MOST WELL-BELOVED MOTHER,  
—In the humblest manner in my power (and verily I should wish to kneel at your feet to beseech this pardon) I entreat you to for-

give your poor loving son and husband now of your most fair and gentille daughter Madame Françoise, for the fear, pain, and sorrow I have caused you, whom I most desire to love, honour, and serve as long as I live. Mother, I beseech you to command me in every thing; and as you were most willing I should wed your daughter, so now be not angry with me that I have prevented long and dangerous delays by contracting marriage with her this day in the presence of many weighty and honourable persons. I ween this lady is not more meanly married than you should wish her to be; and I shall always and at all seasons be ready to accomplish, with God's grace, whatever shall most be for her advantage and yours, whom I hold to be, next to her, the dearest person to me on earth. It was full sore against my will that I so much offended you, as I must needs have done, in this matter; and I shall be more glad than any man alive if you will overlook the bad doing of that which you desired should be done, only not in this wise, and speedily come hither to my wife and your child, who says she would be the most contented little madame in the world if her lady mother and her good

Jeanne were here. If you will do me this good, then I shall be absolved of any notable offence in this matter; for every one then shall see that as you received me yestereve as your son with many gracious and endearing terms, so now you accept me for your daughter's husband and your most faithful and loving servant in all which you shall command me.

I have taken this paper whereon I write to Françoise, who is playing with a doll, which the majordomo's children have dressed to simulate a queen, and she stayed her playing awhile to write these words: "Madame maman, prithe come here. Gualdo is a very fair castle. I had a long and gleesome ride with Monseigneur Gilles yestereve, and this morn we have been to church to be married. I like to be his wife, but I want my good mother and Jeanette."

Madame and dear mother, God seeth my heart. When last night I went into Madame Dorac's chamber to look at Françoise asleep, I knelt down by the side of the little bed wherein, like the fair image of a carved saint, she reposed, and made a vow, which He heard, that I would always worship her from this



time forth, first as a tender, playful father, and then a loving husband, until death us do part; and in token thereof reverently kissed her little hand, which was resting on the bedclothes all beautiful and white. Now the small finger of that fair hand weareth the nuptial ring in token of plighted troth. I confess and deny not that her broad lands and much dowry allured my ambitious hopes; but trust me, lady, I would now liefer forego them all than possess them and yield Françoise to my brother's minion. Every thread of her golden hair is a sacred link about my heart. The sight of her moves me to pray. The thought of her brings heaven to my thinking, and chases evil from me like a good spell. God forgive me if, as I misdoubt, I committed a sin in the stealing of my promised bride; but now I will serve God, and be a meet guardian for this angel. If you come hither, all shall be well. I pray God to move you to do me and Françoise and yourself so great a good. Almighty God have you in His keeping!

Your loving humble son and servant,

GILLES DE BRETAGNE.

This letter changed the current of Dame Catherine's thoughts, and straightly reconciled her to Monseigneur Gilles. Now she forgave him more easily than I could do. She was both glad that Françoise was married to a royal prince, and greatly comforted that neither the duke nor any one else could reproach her with any complicity therein. If he is angered at it (which is almost incredible, for this marriage brings great estates into his family, and makes his brother rich and puissant without loss to himself), she can then plead that she has been compelled thereunto, and made, as the proverb says, virtue of necessity. So we went to Gualdo that day, and Françoise and her lord were, I ween, right glad to see us. She flew into her mother's arms, and he fell at her feet, shedding tears of joy. Methought the embracing and fine speeches would never end. Madame Françoise begged of me a holyday because she was married. I foresee I shall have some trouble with her royal highness. She pouts a little when I call her to her lessons; and when I said there were rods at Gualdo as well as at Dinant, she answered, monseigneur her husband would order them

all to be burnt if she asked him. I know not the thing he would not do at her request, he is so fond of the petite madame. So I use other ingenious methods to reduce her to obedience, exhorting her to be staid and reasonable, as befits a married princess; and she is so apt and toward a child, that these means suffice to move her to correct her faults. Ah, beloved Marguerite, 'tis strange, after so long a lapse of time, to live again under the same roof as Monseigneur Gilles! I had often said to the good God that I prayed Him to take from me all happiness in this world, if only I might one day serve this prince in some notable manner; and methinks if I can train his wife so that she shall be a comfort to him when she cometh to years of discretion, I shall have been heard therein. But I beseech you, good friend, cease not to be his bedeswoman, and to crave the like of other devout persons, so that no evil shall happen to him in consequence of this marriage, which I sometimes fear will bring no good with it. For doth not the holy Paul say, "Do not ill that good may come thereof"? and this saying troubles me not a little. Françoise was sitting on his knee one

day, when I perceived her countenance waxed sad; and laying her soft cheek against his bearded one, she said, "Ah, my good prince—my poor prince!" and there was somewhat mournful in her utterance of these words which pained my heart very much. An old man who lives in a neighbouring forest, and has showings of the future, hath told me that once, when he was in prayer, he had a vision of Monseigneur's visage pale and livid, and like to one who gasps for breath. God help us all! At the last pardon, strange persons were seen lurking about the castle, which some took to be spies. I pray thee have a Mass said at the shrine of our Lady of Everingham for the prince and his little wife. The Holy Trinity have thee in His keeping!

"Thy loving friend and servant to command,  
JEANNE DE KERSABIEC."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE CLOUD OF THE SIZE OF A MAN'S HAND.

JEANNE's letter filled me with manifold apprehensions, which would have wholly captured my thoughts, had they not been forcibly engaged at that period by events at home of grave and dire import. The Queen told me one day, as a great secret, that it was soon intended to summon Parliament to meet at Edmondsbury. When I inquired wherefore there sooner than in London, she laid her finger on her lip, as if to caution me not to speak freely on that point. But in another moment she said :

“Great events are at hand, Meg. In sooth, the old enemy's power is waxing too great.”

“What, the devil's?” I said.

“Nay, nay,” she replied, laughing. “Albeit I deny not that the enemy I speak of hath a diabolical spirit.”

“Does your majesty speak of the Duke of Gloucester?”

“Yea, I do. York is horribly discontented because Somerset is regent of France in his stead, and letters and interviews have passed betwixt him and our uncle of Gloucester, which give reason to apprehend some treason to be hatching in the realm. Nay, not apprehensions only, but rather proofs of this exist.”

“Good Lord! And what is then to be done?” I asked, dismayed.

“Much,” the Queen answered. “But the first step is this Parliament at Bury.”

“Hath the cardinal advised this?”

“The cardinal is no longer accessible to worldly thoughts. He still repeats, if spoken to by any one he cannot refuse to answer, that there shall be no safety for the King or for me, or for this realm, whilst the duke hath power. This he will maintain with his last breath, and that if he has to appear to-day at God’s judgment seat, he fears no condemnation for this part of his conduct, albeit many other sins he shall have to answer for; but otherwise he is absorbed in the expectation of death. Hast

thou not heard how last week he rehearsed his own funeral, and lay on his coffin in the Cathedral at Winchester, his hands joined on his breast, whilst the clergy and the monks sung over him a funeral dirge, as though he had been already dead ? Then afterwards his will was read, in which he bequeathes all he has to the poor, excepting two hundred pounds to the King, who will not, I know, accept it. When it was mentioned to him, he answered, ‘that he would not touch his money, for he had ever been a most kind uncle to him, and all he left behind him should go to the poor, which was what would most benefit his soul, and he prayed to God to reward him.’ The day after this solemn office a High Requiem Mass was said, and then the cardinal took leave of all his friends, and was carried back to his chamber. But after we return from Bury I hope to go to Wolvesey, for I would fain receive a final blessing from this dear friend, who hath been a father more than an uncle to me.”

I did not accompany the Queen to Bury, whither she went a short time after this conversation, for it was not my turn then to wait

upon her majesty ; but her grace favoured me with a letter immediately after her arrival, in which she said that all the commonalty of Suffolk had assembled there in defensible array. The Parliament had met that day in the refectory of St. Edmund's abbey, and the first matter brought forward was the exchange of her revenues of 4,666*l.* 13*s.* out of the customs for certain lands and hereditaments settled on her for life, which pleased her not a little. The next day to the one on which I had received her majesty's favour, it happened that in the maids of honour's chamber at Westminster I was sitting with Lady Isabel Butler, Mary Beaumont, and some other persons. Tidings had reached England of Monseigneur Gilles's marriage and the manner of it ; and the Lady Isabel, who hath always borne him ill-will, because he is a French prince, and their majesties great affection to him, related the story in an ill-natured manner. She said common men had been hung for less crimes than the one this beau sire had committed. " For is not a man gibbeted," quoth she, " for stealing a horse or even a sheep,—sometimes for killing a deer or only a fox in a nobleman's park ?



but here is a prince which, in a forcible and brutal manner, robs a mother of her child—not for any affection which he entertains for the damsel—for I pray you, doth a man of more years than twenty care for a wench of seven years of age?—no, but for the lands and towns she owns, he forces a marriage with her against her mother's will, who is a widow, and therefore without defence. If this offence doth not cry to Heaven for vengeance, I know not what sin should do so."

I was opening my lips to defend the prince from this slanderous charge, yet feeling sorely wounded at heart that he should have been so rash as to commit an action which none could justify, albeit much may be advanced to excuse it; but before I could speak the door opened, and Mr. Cotton, one of the gentlemen of the Queen's household, burst into the room, and cried:

"Ladies, news have arrived from Bury at the which men hold their breath. What think you has happened?"

"Nought to the King or Queen?" several exclaimed at once.

"No, God be praised!" he cried; "but

the Duke of Gloucester is arrested on the charge of high treason, and committed to close custody."

We stood speechless—some for one reason, some for another. I was seized with a great terror, for methought this looked like the beginning of an endless trouble. Thinking of the Queen's youth, her sway over the King, the uneasy state of the kingdom, which I heard of from persons outside the Court; and my Lord Cardinal on his death-bed, who had been the main stay of their majesties' councils up to that time, my heart misgave me. Even amongst the Queen's household there existed great disaffection to her favourite noblemen, if not to herself; and strong symptoms thereof were not lacking on this occasion. Lady Isabel's countenance grew as black as thunder, and she said with passion: "God forgive those which have done this foul wrong to a prince of the blood!"

This reminds me how often words are used which convey a different meaning than the poor words themselves should have. As one says to another, "Much good may it do thee!" or, like in this case, "God forgive you!" and

all the while hath no desire good should ensue or mercy be shown to the offenders. Mary Beaumont's irascible spirit resented her companion's speech, and she exclaimed :

“God be praised, treason is discovered in time, and justice overcomes traitors !”

Her thanksgiving incensed Lady Isabel as much as she herself had been angered at that lady's pious desire ; and from the lips of both there flowed an abundance of retorting speeches touching the chief persons of the State, and even the King and Queen ; which were very unseemly in that place.

In a few days I was sent for by the Queen to Bury. If my fancy erred not, her mien and behaviour had become somewhat different from what I had hitherto observed in her. Till then she had not indeed lacked decision of manner, but it was rather that of a petted child or indulged woman resolved to have her will, than the commanding aspect of a sovereign. Though only seventeen years of age and slight in form, the majesty of her countenance and carriage had noticeably increased. She looked like one who could bear on her young brow the whole weight of a crown.

"Meg," she said when I came in, "the battle is engaged—the gauntlet thrown down. Since my coming to England I have had to fight, as one might say, in the dark. I have been the object of shameful attacks from the duke's party, and, like one pinioned, could not return the blows. At last the King is convinced of their treachery, which he was very loth to credit. The coast is now clear, and I feel mine own power. When the act was done, and the warrant for Gloucester's arrest signed, I for the first time felt I was a queen."

I replied, "Madame, God send that this course proves safe and prosperous for this country; for men will surely lay it, if otherwise, to your majesty's charge."

"I care not what men say," she answered; "nor do I deny my part in this bold deed; but Somerset and Suffolk, Shrewsbury, Beaumont, and Worcester, all advised it. The proofs are indisputable that the duke has been corresponding with York. Because I have as yet no children, they plot as to who shall succeed the King, and without his knowledge devise his crown as they list. Ah! they counted

without their host, as we say in France; without the Queen, as they shall find in England."

In this strain she talked whenever I saw her; and on the morning of the 7th of March, as she was sitting at her toilette-table, her maids dressing her hair, she spoke in French with me on the same theme. She looked at herself in the mirror, and, smiling, said, "Meg, I would give those black eyes, which men say are so beautiful, those features, which painters declare nothing can excel (here she shrugged her shoulders with a pretty indifference), for more ability, more patience, more cunning. Those qualities, I warrant you, I need; for even in his prison the duke is a powerful enemy. York and Warwick, that young baron for whom hundreds of Nevilles would fight and die, are at large. A party of turbulent nobles, the lewd burgesses of London, the wicked Lollards, which blaspheme and rebel, he secretly and from his durance leads and impels. O, my Lord of Gloucester, it is a *combat à la vie et à la mort* between you and Marguerite d'Anjou! Which shall conquer?"

She shook her hand in defiance, and, with her raven hair hanging about her shoulders,

and her countenance fired with passion, she looked very beautiful. At that moment the King entered her chamber paler than was his wont, with an inexpressible sorrowful look on his face; he walked up to her, and took her two hands in his own. "Good wife," he said in a faltering voice, "a miserable hap has befallen us,—mine uncle Gloucester is dead."

"How? where?" gasped the Queen.

"Found dead in his bed. O Jesu, have mercy on his soul!" the King exclaimed, and began to weep.

"He hath not been foully dealt with?" the Queen asked in a wild manner.

"There are no marks of violence on his body. But his soul! O God, his soul! Would to God he had not thus died!"

The Queen was shivering; then she burst forth crying, "They will say he was murdered, and his death shall be more fatal to us than his life. Dead! O death, death, *this* is thy victory, *this* is thy sting. Hatred dies before a corpse. Heavens!" she exclaimed, starting up, "but wherefore do we delay to speak and to act at this crisis? Where is Lord Suffolk? Sire, the duke's body must be this

instant carried to the Parliament chamber, and let all the world witness that no violence hath been committed. Yes, let the English gaze on their dead idol." Then she wrung her hands, and cried passionately, "O Duke of Gloucester, I would fain see you alive again; for I have wished your death, and when such wishes are granted they affright the soul." She turned to the King. He was sitting with one hand supporting his face, and the other resting on his knee. I noticed a strange fixity of expression in his gaze, as if he beheld something to us invisible, with no grief or horror, but an indescribable steadfastness of contemplation, which methought had in it somewhat either above or beside what was natural. The Queen looked anxiously upon him, and spoke to him twice or thrice before he answered her. At the last she said, "Sweet my lord, come to the chapel, where Mass will be said for the repose of the duke's soul." Then he seemed to awake, and uttered the words, "*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine,*" and walked straight with her to the chapel.

Not long afterwards his eminence the cardinal died also, and the King and the Queen

mourned long and bitterly for him. A more gentle spirit than I had yet observed in her showed itself at this time in her majesty. Her fear that the Duke of Gloucester had met with foul play (it was bruited about that he had been murdered; without any warrantable grounds indeed, but with so much animosity and bold assertion that she herself was accused of being privy to it) tormented her very much. Master Waynfleet came then to Court. The very day of the cardinal's death the King sent for him, and addressed these words to him: "Master William, should you obtain a benefice by our favour, do you look to be able to retain it?" Master Waynfleet replied he would do with diligence whatever the King should order. "Then," quoth his Majesty, "our will and order is that you should be Bishop of Winchester;" and, without suffering him to speak any more, he sent the *congé-d'élire* to the chapter of the cathedral with an earnest commendation of his right trusty and well-beloved counsellor, Master William Waynfleet, the provost of Eton. There was not one dissentient voice amongst the canons; and a deputation was sent to the new bishop, who



had heard of his election with a very heavy heart, for he affectioned his college and the peacefulness thereof beyond any honours. This good prelate was of so humble and affable a disposition, that the most adverse persons of all parties set store by him. He was very devout to the Blessed Virgin, and his favourite prayer and chief study had ever been the hymn Magnificat. His life and behaviour proved, I ween, a true commentary on our Lady's words, and copy of her example. He hid himself for some hours from the deputies, and spent the time in fasting and prayer. At sunset, they found him lying prostrate before the altar of the college chapel. I think he must have said as he rose and followed them, "Behold the servant of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word." To this prelate the Queen disclosed her conscience, and derived much comfort from his wholesome counsels. She thought more of religion than at any previous time of her life, and laboured hard to bring about the continuance of peace with France, and to promote in this country the establishment of useful trades and manufactures to benefit the poor people, and also com-

menced the foundation of Queen's College in Cambridge, which was dedicated to the honour of Almighty God, and placed under the tutelage of her patron St. Margaret and of St. Bernard. Sir John Wenlock laid the first stone thereof, with this inscription on it in Latin : "The Lord shall be a refuge to our sovereign lady Queen Margaret, and this stone shall be a token of the same."

She laboured very hard at that time to reconcile enmities and win over adverse persons. The gay spirits she had hitherto evinced were exchanged for a thoughtful demeanour, and her lightsome mood seldom returned after the Duke of Gloucester's death. Many persons noticed this change, and some, I think, ascribed it to some sort of remorse of conscience touching that mysterious event ; but I am not of that opinion. Some other cause, I well know, worked that effect. She prayed more after that day, and began again to write on her tablets. Perceiving her to be thus employed, I said on one occasion, "Madame, may not the keeper of your journal transcribe what you have written ?" She shook her head, and her eyes filled with tears. One by one she

tore the leaves and cast them into the fire. "These are not pages," she said in a low voice, "which any eyes, not even yours, good Meg, may see; but the old habit of writing relieves the pent-up heart."

She gazed silently at the parched and shrivelling scroll, and heaved so deep a sigh that, falling down on my knees, I said, "O madame, discharge your soul of its burthen. Your majesty may trust one who loves you so entirely as your poor servant."

She answered, trying to smile, "I am vexed with those crabbed English mercers, who jalouse my silk weavers which I have sent for from the Low Countries. They say these poor creatures injure their trade, and that a like privilege was never before granted to women, which I misdoubt; and if it is true, why then methinks a bad custom should be no hindrance to a good work."

"Madame," I said again,—and indeed in the writing of it I am ashamed to have been so bold,—“I know it is not this quarrel which grieves you. I cry mercy for my foolishness; but I pray your majesty excuse the license of the tongue, which wags at the bidding of a leal heart.”

“Meg,” the Queen answered kindly, taking my hand, “if aught grieves me more than usual, it is only——” Then she stopped short. “It is only,” she resumed, “what I never can so much as utter in any ear but his who shrives me. The Bishop of Winchester shall soon be here; and if he comforts me, all shall be well.”

When the bishop came, her majesty confessed to him. Afterwards I thought her gravity, when she was alone, increased, as did also her application to State affairs. One or two other changes I also noticed. She had been wont till that time to express sometimes impatience when the King went often to Eton, or made pilgrimages to holy places out of London; but now she seemed well pleased he should follow his devout bent, and procured him books from France of entertainment and devotion. When she was in his company, she seemed the most happy person in the world, and as merry as she ever had been; but when he went abroad without her, I have seen her eyes follow him, as he rode out, with a wistful expression; and then suddenly breaking, as it were, from her thinking, she sent for the

ministers, and held long conferences with them touching questions of peace and war, and the internal government of the kingdom. Sometimes she spent the whole night in reading State papers and reports, which I heard the King once with much tenderness reprove. She smiled most sweetly, as was always her wont when he spoke to her, but said she must needs employ some hours in study, [which in the day she had no leisure for, or she should forget her learning. She tried in the evenings to engage the King to play at chess with her, and at prime, in which she excelled; but he had no liking for these diversions. His chief entertainment was to plan new colleges or hospitals for his poor subjects, or compute means for more abundant almsgiving from his exhausted treasury. "Come, good wife," he would say, "exercise thy great wit, which God our Lord hath given thee, to devise help for these great needs;" and then he showed her letters from destitute persons, and compassed measures for their relief. And on the days of his father and mother's deaths, and other members of his family, he made with her solemn offerings for their souls.

When the griefs which she heard of at that time excelled human ability to assist, or the Lollards committed sacrileges, which of all things pained him the most, methinks she used ingenious artifices to conceal the tidings as far as she was able from his knowledge. Once when she refused to present to him a petition from some town wherein many had died of hunger and had lacked assistance, so that they had been almost distraught with suffering of body and soul, the Archbishop of Canterbury exclaimed,

“Madame, you enjoin silence, and would spare the King the recital of these woes ; yet I doubt not his majesty would find some means to aid the sufferers, and would not desire to be ignorant of his subjects’ dismal plight.”

“O my lord,” she quickly exclaimed, “the King’s heart is too great for his ability.” Then she seemed to fear to be misunderstood, for a crimson colour rushed into her cheeks, and she added, “for the ability of his purse, my lord, which ill matches that of his heart and of his head.”

O Deus meus ! Deus meus ! I think I see a cloud of the size of a man’s hand, which may

one day obscure the whole sky of the Queen's life; but hardly in mine own thinking, much less on paper, dare I give the frightful phantom a defined shape. And, now I think of it, some of the Nevilles have uttered in my hearing words which, as I recal their sense by the light of this fear, cause me an inward sickness of heart.

## CHAPTER XV.

### NEWS FROM BRITTANY.

IN the month of April of the same year I received the letter I now transcribe :

*Jeanne de Kersabiec to the Lady Margaret  
de Roos.*

“I recommend me unto you, my good friend, and write in great haste from Nantes, where I would to God we did not abide, but whence I can send you a letter with better convenience than from the Castle of Gualdo, where indeed it may easily happen we never return. Since I last wrote to you, very angry letters have passed betwixt Monseigneur Gilles and his brother the Duke of Brittany, wherein the latter charged him with many crimes besides the offence he committed in the enlèvement of Mademoiselle de Dinant, accusing him moreover of high treason against himself. The Connétable de Richemont and Monseigneur Pierre reasoned with the duke, and



pacified him for a while with many assurances that Monseigneur Gilles had never so much as thought of any treason in this matter ; that dame Catherine de Rohan was well pleased he should marry her daughter ; and that great mutual advantages would be derived from this union. Arthur de Montauban, when he found his master inclined to a reconciliation with his brother, now urged, I cannot choose but think with a cruel artifice, that an interview should take place betwixt them here at Nantes, where the Court was to remain at this time. He well knows that fire and water agree not more ill than those two brothers, and that the poisonous oil of his own discourse falling on the flame of kindred discord would easily cause it to burn fiercely. So nothing would serve him but to persuade the duke to invite Monseigneur Gilles to bring his young wife to the Court. My heart misgave me when this summons came, but I dared not to disclose my thoughts, and followed my little princess to this place. Her mother's mourning and weak health kept her at home, and Madame Françoise d'Amboise assumed the care of her young sister-in-law. In the midst

of the feasts, tournaments, and diversions of this Court she leads a life so pure and holy, as if the palace was a cloister and the world a school of virtue. Though she is so beautiful that none can look on her without admiration, there is not so bold a gallant on earth which should dare to utter in her presence the least unseemly word. I saw her come into the duke's presence holding my little princess by the hand; and albeit so different in age, one looked not more pure and innocent than the other. All the nobles of Brittany were there assembled, and the ambassadors of France, Scotland, and Spain. All eyes were rivetted on the fair child, of whom all had heard and none had yet seen her. Like a guardian angel, her young noble godmother led her to the duke's feet and presented her to him. 'Another Françoise,' he said smiling. 'Another sister,' she gently replied. 'Monseigneur, embrassez-la.' Then the duke saluted his little kinswoman, and a murmur of applause rose in the hall. I then saw a face which, if I was to live until doomsday, I should not lose the memory of. I divined whose it was, and I watched it with an

admixture of fear and admiration. I have heard that in Naples there is an evil charm which some carry in their eye, and misfortune falls on whosoever these persons look upon. This Arthur de Montauban—for it was he—has, I think, this fatal spell in his gaze ; the very beauty of his visage I misliked with no common aversion, and the lurking devilry in his smile made my blood run cold. I saw him and Monseigneur Gilles meet that day, and noticed the flush of the latter's cheek, and the deadly paleness of his foe. It was a wise scheme, alas, to launch an enemy on this uncertain sea of a court, and by false pilotry to mislead him amidst its shoals. This is the work which this son of an Italian woman with feminine malice pursues and succeeds in, I trow. O Marguerite ! the rashness, the imprudence which marked the early years of Monseigneur Gilles doth but increase as life advances. The duke's suspicious resentful temper is like unto a heap of combustible material, upon which his brother's outbursts fall like sparks which would not kindle a fire, if an ever-ready enemy did not secretly fan the flame. The more the prince is loved and

praised, the more renown he gains in the lists, the more the duke grows ill-disposed towards him. So much so, that a child's innocent speeches are reported to blacken his fame. The little wife said one day she wished her husband was as puissant as the Duke of Brittany, and lo and behold, a report is spread that the prince doth conspire to supplant the duke. I pray you, who can be safe where this spirit prevails, and the most horrible calumnies are believed by one brother of another? I shall soon leave this Court. God be praised that the young Françoise is in the hands of the Lady of Guincamp. It sorely grieves me to part with her; but Madame Catherine, my poor cousin, is dying, I fear, and hath sent for me. I have long ago abandoned all thoughts or hopes of earthly bliss, and every day detaches me more from the world, which, as Friar Brackley used to say, has no one joy full and perfect; for if a man be set at a board with delicate meats and drinks, and he sees a cauldron boiling before him with pitch and brimstone, in the which he should be thrown as soon as he had dined, should he joy much in his delicious meats?

“I have but one passionate desire, which is to see those I affection on the path to heaven. Scandals increase every day; dreadful crimes are committed. Indifferency to religion prevails, and talk is ministered concerning the Church by strangers from other lands—I thank God not by mine own people—which makes the blood run cold. Ah, methinks those that love God in these bad days should do penance, and afflict their bodies and souls to obtain mercy for others. I have a strange call sounding in mine ears, yea, knocking at the door of my heart sometimes; and God knoweth where it shall lead thy poor loving friend, for whom cease not to pray.”

I have not heard from Jeanne for many months, but through some other persons mournful tidings from Brittany have reached this Court. Alas, Monseigneur Gilles has been thrown into prison. His enemies have so far compassed his ruin, and the duke's heart appears hopelessly closed against him. In vain did the connétable entreat the King of France to use his good offices, as the uncle and sovereign lord of these princes. Albeit

the Queen will not allow it, he hath, I ween, acted with treachery in this matter, and deceived Arthur de Richemont. Then, as a last resource, this good man, with Monseigneur Pierre and his wife, forced the duke by their great urgency to grant an audience to his brother in the presence of all their kindred. The aged warrior fell on his knees before his stubborn nephew, bowing down his gray hairs to this humiliation for the love he bore to his sister's youngest born, the fair son she loved so well. In vain did Françoise d'Amboise, with streaming eyes, embrace his knees and shed torrents of tears, which only seemed the more to anger him, whose jealousy waxed more bitter at every sign of affection for his young brother. His visage waxed more fierce as these pleadings became more urgent, and at last he broke forth in a violent fury, and insulted his victim with savage upbraidings and cruel taunts. The venom a lying tongue had daily distilled into his soul now found vent in a malice which knew no bounds. The lips of a sovereign and a brother poured forth the hatred of the serpent coiled round his heart. For a while (an eye-witness de-

scribed the scene) Monseigneur Gilles listened in silence on his knees, his gaze fixed on the ground. Then suddenly rising he exclaimed,

“No more tears, I pray you ; no more prayers for me. Messire le Connétable, and you all, my loving and noble kindred, bear witness that I appeal this day to the justice of my country. Let me be tried by the Estates of Brittany. Now I return to custody, and God judge betwixt thee and me, Monseigneur François, and deal with me on His Doomsday as mercilessly as you now do, if in aught I have deserved this treatment at your hands.”

Then he was hurried back to prison, and the connétable left Nantes broken-hearted. Dame Françoise, in season and out of season, plied the duke with remonstrances, ever calling to his mind his cruelty, and beseeching him, for his soul's sake, if for no other cause, to be pitiful to his brother. Then he grew weary of her reproaches, and banished her and her husband from the Court ; and she took the little Françoise to Guincamp ; and one who has been at that place has seen them often in the church. Monseigneur Gilles is soon to be

tried by the Estates of Brittany, as he desired. O, God send they acquit him ! I asked the same traveller if he had heard aught of Jeanne. He said Madame de Dinant was dead, and Mademoiselle de Kersabiec had disappeared the day of her funeral, after long prayer in the chapel, and naught since hath been seen of her.

The war with France is like to break out again, though the Queen hath laboured hard to prevent it. But the king her uncle is resolved, 'tis said, to reconquer Normandy, and the people here accuse the Queen, because she is French, of desiring ill success to our arms, which is a most false calumny. The friends of the Duke of York spread these reports, and because the Duke of Somerset is regent in France, foretell all manner of calamities to the realm. The Queen hath procured that the Duke of York should be charged with the government of Ireland. "Now," her grace says, "we are rid, for a time at least, of this plotter."

But some reckon this to be a very dangerous policy ; for thus this prince has opportunities to strengthen himself in one part of



his majesty's dominions ; and my Lord of Salisbury, and his son Lord Warwick, take care his interests shall not suffer at home. Albeit they dare not attack the Queen directly, nothing can exceed their animosity against the Duke of Suffolk ; and I hear talk even amongst such as come to the Court touching the King's incapacity for government, and that he is fitter for a cloister than a crown ; and has in a manner deposed himself by leaving the affairs of the kingdom in the hands of a woman, who useth his name to conceal her usurpation, for that, according to the laws of this country, a queen consort hath no power, but title only. Though her majesty hath a firmer hand wherewith to steer the helm of the State than any other person of her sex and her years in Europe, she is nevertheless only nineteen, and her advisers, I fear, not often discreet, and more concerned to advance their fortunes than her interests. Once I told her the speeches I heard touching her ambitious designs in entertaining the King with everything except the affairs of the State and the cares of government. She rested her face on her hands, leaning her elbows on

a table, and fixing her piercing eyes on mine, as if to divine my secret thoughts.

"Say they so?" she asked, with some bitterness of tone. "O, I admire how fools babble of what angels would scarcely dare to speak of."

"Forgive me, madame," I said, in a faltering voice.

"Peace, peace, good Meg," she cried, half impatient, and yet kindly; "I meant not to reprove thy well-meant garrulity. I know thou lovest the King and me, and therefore I will tell thee that this vulgar blame condemns in me what it cannot—and God send it may never—comprehend. There are secret wires in stage-plays which spectators discern not, and in the conduct of men springs of action which none but the actors themselves can fathom."

"Will your majesty play at cards this evening with the King?" I asked; for it is my business to set the table for prime; and I wished to break off a dangerous discourse, in which I had almost angered the Queen, I thought.

She turned round with a fierceness which amazed me. Her lip quivered.

"You are too bold—or else stupid," she added; and verily I looked bewildered. Then she seized my arm, and said in a hurried manner, "Know you not when and where cards were invented?"

"No, madame, no," I answered with unfeigned surprise, her behaviour was so strange.

"O, then, go and set the table for prime," she said, with a half-relieved, half-dejected countenance.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A KING'S PROPHECY.

As I was one day with some other persons of the Queen's household in the ante-chamber which leadeth to our apartments, we listened to the speeches of various persons as they went in and came out. Lord Shrewsbury's visage was most sad, I thought, and he looked older by a great deal than when I had last seen him at court. This earl's affection for the Queen hath never altered; and in it is united a meet reverence for his sovereign and a paternal tenderness for one so young and lovely. 'Tis pretty to see him study her likings, and minister to her delights, in all honourable and pleasant ways; and she, with a winsome respect, regard his aged years with a cherishing affection. He is more pleased than any man alive in this country with her majesty's wit and learning, and he loveth to speak French with her, wherein he thinks he excels; but her grace

sometimes cannot refrain from smiling at the mistakes of the good lord, and says she talketh in English with less faults than he in French, which he disallows, and thereupon they have friendly disputes. Not further than yesterday, her majesty had writ a letter for the recommendation of one dame in the Convent of Barking to be prioress, and used these words therein : “ Wherefore we desire and pray you that in accomplissement of my lord’s request and ours in this partie, ye will have the said dame in your next election right tenderly recommended, and choose her to be your prioress and governor, by consideration of her many virtues, religious governance, and good fame that she is renomed of.” So when my Lord Shrewsbury, for whose contentment this letter was writ—for that dame was a kinswoman of his—read these sentences, he grimly smiled, and said, “ Madame, I misdoubt if *accomplissement* and *renomed* should be English words.” Upon which her majesty laughed, and answered they should be English if she pleased ; “ for,” quoth she, “ if a man speaketh amiss, ’tis the custom to say he doth clip the King’s English. By that same token, I may

do what I please with my lord's possessions; for what is his is mine." One only quarrel the Queen has had in these four years with Lord Shrewsbury. This was touching Joan of Arc, which he holds to have been a witch; and the Queen conceives she was a saint.

When he returned from the presence-chamber on the morn I speak of, Lady Elisabeth de Say met him with these words:

"My lord, it is bruited that the Duke of Suffolk is in the Tower. I pray you what is laid to his charge?"

"Madame," the old lord replied, "his father and three of his brethren have been slain in France. He has himself served in the wars thirty-and-four years. He has been of the Order of the Garter thirty years, and a councillor of the King fifteen years, and has once been seventeen years in the wars without once returning home. I pray God his enemies may serve the King one-half as well as this strange traitor hath done."

"Marry, my Lord Shrewsbury," cried that bird of evil omen Lady Isabel Butler, "he intended to wed his son John with little Margaret Beaufort, and, after murdering the

King, to declare her to be heiress of the crown."

"Murther the King!" I exclaimed, amazed. Upon which she rejoined, with one of her malicious smiles :

"Mark, I said not *the Queen*."

If frowns could kill, then methinks the lady would then have died, if I judge by the scowl which darkened my Lord Shrewsbury's countenance.

"Madame," he cried, "you have to thank God that you are a woman. No man should have gone unscathed after he had uttered that speech in my hearing."

The lady turned away, feigning not to hear ; and then talk was ministered concerning the bad news from France ; and some persons said that the Duke of Somerset was losing all which the Dukes of Bedford and of York had preserved ; and one Thomas Crawford, the Queen's herbman, reported that tidings had arrived from Portsmouth, where there had been very mischievous riots, and the Bishop of Chichester, who had gone there to pay the troops for the French expedition, had been killed by the mob. And presently Ralph

Osborne brought news that William Taylboys, the outlaw, had been discovered with armed men near the council-chamber, and at the instance of Lord Cromwell committed to the Tower. Mary Beaumont came afterwards to my chamber; and when I said, "Ah, Moll, these new haps will cause further grief to the Queen," she answered, "In truth, she hath enough of it and to spare. I warrant thee, Meg, there are not many women with so brave a heart in their bosoms as this lady. I have heard here and there a word fall from her lips which betokeneth sore inward disturbance. Sometimes when she is at Windsor she cometh to see Dame Alice Botler, my kinswoman, which was the King's governess, and now lives in a house in the Park. She questions her touching his majesty's childhood, and likes to hear her relate how he looked and behaved when she had him in her charge. Once when I was there she exclaimed, "Ah me, Mistress Alice, I love this Windsor, because my liege lord and dear husband was born here." Dame Alice replied: "Well, *his* mother, Queen Katherine, shed many tears because of that birth at Windsor." "And why so, I pray



you?" the Queen asked in great amazement. Then Dame Alice related that when the late King departed for France, after the death of the Duke of Clarence at Beaugy, he charged her with many urgent enforcements not to lie in at Windsor, for that if he had a son born at that place he should be misfortunate all the days of his life. The Queen (she said) smiled, and would have it that to be born at the birth-place of Edward the Third must needs prove a good omen for an English prince, and Windsor the most comfortable palace for her to be delivered in. But the King would in noways alter his thinking, and left her with this strenuous injunction. "And durst she disobey it?" the Queen asked. Dame Alice replied, "She was wont to say the King was too superstitious, and she should lie in where she pleased, and no evil should come of it to her child or herself. She had a playful and daring spirit in those her young years, and would not be ruled even by her lord. At the last she resolved to remove to Sheen, but was taken ill before her departure; and so my lord the King was born at Windsor. I remember the bright smile on her pale fair face when she

held him in her arms, who was the most beautiful infant that could be seen, and the glee with which she said, 'Nothing in this babe, methinks, doth betoken that misfortune should be his lot.' Yet when some time afterwards Lord Fitzhugh related to her how, when the King heard at Meaux of his son's birth, he had eagerly inquired where the child was born, and being told at Windsor, had exclaimed,

"I, Henry, born at Monmouth,  
Shall small time reign and much get :  
But Henry of Windsor shall long reign and lose all ;  
But as God will, so be it."

The poor Queen shed some tears ; and as years went on and disasters occurred, she thought more and more of those words, and sorrowed very much for her youthful stubbornness, and humbly confessed her fault when she was dying, and begged the King her Lord to forgive her."

"What said my lord?"

"He bade her be of good comfort, for that misfortunes are no evils to a Christian soul ; and if he should lose all on earth, he should hope to get the more in heaven."

"That is like his majesty," the Queen ex-

claimed. "Goodness is never lacking in his grace; and was he in childhood grave and *débonnaire*?"

"He had always a sweet gravity in his countenance," my kinswoman replied, "and I have not seen the child which could be compared to his highness for towardness of disposition. Mrs. Joan Astley says that even in his infancy graciousness was noticeable in his looks and actions. When he passed through the streets of London, sitting on his mother's lap, he saluted the people, and conducted himself with much sadness; and those pretty hands, which could not yet feed himself, were made to wield a little sceptre. I mind the day when the Earl of Warwick showed him to the peers in Parliament, and one of the lords presented him with the orb. He put one little hand upon it and then the other, and seemed to doubt if it should be a thing to be afraid of or to play with."

"Ah, Dame Alice," the Queen said smiling, "you must needs have been in great renown for a very wise and expert person, since the King's council appointed you to

teach him courtesy and nurture. No doubt you learnt him early to say his prayers."

"I promise your majesty the King could say his beads as soon as he could speak. And I warrant your grace, when he was only eighteen months of age he would not travel on the Sunday."

"Nay, nay, Dame Alice, this is not to be believed," the Queen exclaimed.

But my good kinswoman would not be gainsayed therein, and declared that it was written in the *Chronicle of London*.

"It happened upon the 13th of November," quoth she, "when the King and his mother were coming from Windsor to London. At night, on the Saturday, they lodged at Staines; and on the morrow, when the King was carried to his mother's car, he shrieked, and sprang, and cried in so lusty a fashion, the like of which had never been seen in him before, that they must needs carry him back to the inn; and there he abode all the day. But on the morrow, when he was borne to the car, he was glad and merry of cheer."

"Come, Dame Alice," cried the Queen, "I am a misbeliever touching this early sanc-

tity which showed itself by kicks and screams. And yet—O, I can well credit that the King had an earlier towardness to serve God than other children.”

Then she kissed Dame Botler, who cried this was too great an honour for a poor woman.

“Nay,” the Queen said; “surely you kissed the King many times, and so his wife may well kiss you.”

“I must confess,” Dame Botler replied, “that sometimes the sweet King’s little arms were thrown about my neck, and then I could not forbear to kiss his fair cheek. God defend his grace, and you, madame, also !”

The Queen said to me afterwards that she liked to converse with Dame Alice, for she reminded her of her own good nurse, Théophanie. And then she harped on the words of the late King touching Henry born at Windsor, and let drop somewhat which showed me she hath fears which others little wot of, and so judge her wrongfully. Yea, Meg, as I said before, this Queen our sovereign lady hath as brave a heart as any woman alive.

I was not often with the Queen betwixt the time of the Duke of Suffolk’s arrest and

that of his departure from the Tower. But that day I stood by her side at a window in the palace at Westminster, and she said to me, with tears in her eyes, "Our most true and leal friend Suffolk is banished for five years. This sentence the King hath signed to save the duke's life, and I pray God this merciful intent succeeds; but I am of opinion that yielding an inch to save an ell in matters of justice on the one side and popular clamour on the other is an ill policy, as was shown forth when Pilate ordered the Lord Jesus to be scourged; the end of which was what we all know."

"'Tis reported," I replied, "that your majesty urged the King at the last to sign that order."

The Queen did not answer for a moment; then she fixed her eyes on me, and said, "Yea, I did so. God only knoweth the cause."

As she uttered those words, a noise beneath the windows of rushing footsteps was heard, and we saw crowds of ruffianly men hurrying towards the Tower, whence the Duke of Suffolk was to depart that morn. A rumour was

spread shortly afterwards that his grace had been attacked and maltreated by the mob ; but this proved to be false : only his servants had been intercepted and beaten. He himself escaped to his estates in Suffolk, whence he was to embark at Ipswich. The Queen had a bad headache in the evening ; and as I was ministering to her, and chafing her brows with distilled water, she broke forth in this wise :

“Jesu, how will all this end ? Discontent is at its height ; the people starve. Their sufferings remind me of the famine in Naples some years ago. Then the pestilent teachers of Lollardry lurk about, poisoning men’s minds, and teaching them to ascribe their sufferings to the sins of the clergy and the nobles. They provoke rebellion against the Church and the throne, and promise that the lands of the rich shall be divided amongst the poor. And there are none that I can see so good, or so wise, or so strong, that they can stem this torrent, which rises more and more, like the tide of the sea when it comes up. The cardinal is dead, Suffolk is banished, Shrewsbury is old and feeble. Waynfleet and Beckington are holy

men, I trow ; but as was said of the few loaves when thousands hungered, 'what be they amongst so many ?' ”

“God be thanked,” I said, “that the King is wise and good.”

She pushed my hand away from her forehead in an impetuous manner, and, sitting in her bed with her fair white arms crossed on her bosom, and her hair falling disordered about her face, exclaimed :

“The King ! Do you too accuse me of small esteem for him ? I tell you there is not one alive that would rule a kingdom so beneficently as my lord if . . . . Ah, perhaps you are one of those who think that I desire to govern alone,—that I am pleased he should pray and study like a monk, so that I may throne it as an absolute sovereign ? Yes, I am blamed on every side ; enemies slander, and friends blindly advise. From France my kinsfolk send me letters which cause me to smile and weep in turn ; they write so unwittingly of what happens here. One only in all the world knoweth what I suffer. God help me ! if I disburthened not my soul in shrift, methinks my brain would give way. Those



claimed. "Goodness is never lacking in his grace; and was he in childhood grave and *débonnaire*?"

"He had always a sweet gravity in his countenance," my kinswoman replied, "and I have not seen the child which could be compared to his highness for towardness of disposition. Mrs. Joan Astley says that even in his infancy graciousness was noticeable in his looks and actions. When he passed through the streets of London, sitting on his mother's lap, he saluted the people, and conducted himself with much sadness; and those pretty hands, which could not yet feed himself, were made to wield a little sceptre. I mind the day when the Earl of Warwick showed him to the peers in Parliament, and one of the lords presented him with the orb. He put one little hand upon it and then the other, and seemed to doubt if it should be a thing to be afraid of or to play with."

"Ah, Dame Alice," the Queen said smiling, "you must needs have been in great renown for a very wise and expert person, since the King's council appointed you to

feigned trial. Then they lowered him into a boat, and with an old rusty sword cut off his noble head. I tell thee, if I was his wife, I would die, or have their blood ; and being his Queen, who owed him all and loved him well, I can only mourn for him with hot useless tears, which shame impotent royalty ! Heavens, to be so used ! To see the King raise to heaven his meek eyes with an anguish which words cannot express ! And this poor soul I am about to see submerged in bottomless grief. What can I say to her ?”

“O madame, tell her to pray, to be patient in her sorrow, to hope in God !” I cried.

“You might as lief bid the angry wind preach to the raging sea, as bid me exhort to patience the wife of murdered Suffolk. If the King sees her, then true comfort, heavenly wisdom, sweet hope, not of this earth, may perchance pass from his soul into hers. In his presence furious passions subside. I have seen this, yea, felt it at times.”

Then we reached the house of the duchess, and the Queen went into her chamber. When she came out again, her eyes were red with weeping.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MAIDS OF HONOUR AGAIN.

I REMEMBER that one day at Sheen, being sad because no tidings reached me from Jeanne, and only uncertain reports of Monseigneur Gilles's lengthened imprisonment and the ill usage he endured, I went into the garden and sat there on the grass in the shade with some of the Queen's maids. At first the merriment of these damsels sounded harshly in my ill-disposed ears, so I leant my head against a tree and feigned to be asleep. Whilst they were gayly devising, my thoughts were far away, picturing to myself a dungeon in France and a fair comely face grown wan with long captivity. Yet I noted their speeches, which, from the well-known sound of each one's voice, I easily distinguished. Albeit in no cheerful mood, their joylity little by little infected me with mirth. The buzzing tongues, light prattle, and gleesome bursts of

laughter matched the music of the birds in that pretty grove. Partly from a natural heavy humour, and a pensive melancholy which early sorrows have engendered, I am not prone to merriment; but when others are gay around me, it lightens my heart; and this contagion is wholesome, for over-gravity breeds moroseness, and ill becomes youth.

Since I began to write, four years ago, many changes have come to pass in this young circle. One hath died, some have married, and new damsels fill their places. Ten little maidens of noble families, not yet twelve years of age, have also been taken into the Queen's household for nurture and instruction; but they do not company with the maids of honour. Only the Lady Margaret Beaufort, because the Queen shows her especial favour, is often to be seen in her majesty's private chambers. I thought that time, when we were sitting under the lime-tree at Sheen, that some of those to whose discourse I then lent a lazy ear would perchance one day play a part on life's stage; that the dawning loveliness of one would expand into beauty, entangling many

in its meshes ; the sprouting wit of another set the world gaping with wonder ; a third leave behind her at her death an admirable odour of sanctity ; a fourth become perhaps an outcast or a heretic—which God defend ! Life in its outset resembles a roll of parchment, which little by little unfolds its pages ; and, to turn a grave thought into a merry one, I will relate what the Duchess of Bedford said to Lord Bonville when he boasted he was made of the stuff which heroes are fashioned of : “ O, good my lord,” her grace replied, “ let us see one ell of that stuff, I pray you, that we may judge of the rest.”

Then little Margaret Beaufort’s voice first struck on mine ear. I heard her say, “ What flower love you best, Mrs. Katherine Strange ?” (This was one of the new maids of honour.)

“ The rose,” that damsel replied.

“ And you, Isminia Scales ?”

“ Why, Peg, methinks I like the sweet-william most.”

Then some one near me whispered to another, “ ’Tis pity there is no blossom called the sweet-henry.” A laugh ensued ; for it was well known this lady was like to wed

Henry Bouchier, Lord Essex's second son, and was not a little fond of him.

Then in an aggrieved voice Mistress Isminia said, "Methinks persons which live in glass houses should not throw stones."

"Peradventure," said another, "Mistress Katherine thinketh the rose which she prefers if called by any other name would smell as sweet, and that an ill-sounding name is no disadvantage to a comely gentleman."

Then all laughed; for it had been bruited at court that Mistress Katherine had tormented the Queen to write for her a letter to Mr. Nicholas Strange, her father, to press him forthwith to consent to the fulfilment of her contract with Robert Bugdon; and I knew this to be true, for I had copied it myself; and methought her majesty was very peremptory with that gentleman, for she charged him, desired, prayed him, and on God's behalf exhorted and required him, to incline to the accomplishment of that marriage without delay or impediment.

Pretty Mistress Katherine waxed very red, and said one name was as good as another, but for her part she would as lief not marry a

man called Bouchier, for in French that meant butcher.

Johanna Dacre then said that she liked no flower so well as a pansy.

"You should call it 'heart's-ease,' Joan," cried Gwendoline Talbot, Lord Lisle's daughter; "'tis a more comfortable name."

"Nay, I see not that," quoth Johanna.

"O yes," rejoined the other, "for in French a pansy is a pensée, and that means thought; and thought, mesdames, is troublesome, and often robs folks of their rest."

"Come!" exclaimed some one, — Mary Beaumont, I think, — "there is a lady there which is a great thinker, and yet is not robbed of her sleep."

"Who said that?" I asked, opening mine eyes. They all laughed, and cried I should guess; but I would not—I was too sleepy. So after a pause one said,

"O, Maud Everingham! I ween you have had a letter this morn from Isabel Woodville."

"I pray you call her Elisabeth," said another.

"Nay, call her Bessy," little Margaret Beaufort cried. "Pretty winsome Bessy!

but, mesdames, as the Queen says when she speaks to you, I am greatly displeased that none of you have chosen her majesty's flower and mine—the white and pink daisy; is it not a very fair one?"

"We all wear the daisy in our hearts," Lady Gwendoline Talbot said. "But now, Maud," she added, "prithce let us hear Bell or Bessy's letter. 'Tis a pity she was not called Jacquetta, like her mother; but when this was proposed, her grace exclaimed, 'Forsooth, no! These English would call her Jacket, which would be an unseemly name.'"

"Now, now, let Maud read," cried several voices; but Maud refused to read or show the letter, to the no small vexation of those damsels; for methinks such as live at court have a greater craving for any kind of news or reports touching the concerns of others than any other persons in the world. Howsoever, when they had dispersed, which happened soon, and they found Maud was resolved not to yield to their entreaties, she took the missive from her bosom and gave it into my hands, desiring my counsel thereon. As it seemeth to me a notable thing that two personages of great



merit and nobility should address a young lady touching the suit of a private gentleman, I transcribe Mistress Woodville's epistle.

“ WELL-BELOVED MAUD,—I thank you for your gentle letter, full tenderly written to me some time ago ; and I doubt not you marvel that I have so long delayed to reply thereunto. I cry you mercy, sweet Maud, for this my slothful behaviour. Verily, I am a more hearty lover than a ready writer, and I have had to pen two letters this week ; and to whom you would never guess—no, not if you exercised your wit from this time to doomsday. What think you, mistress ? Should it not be a wonderful thing if the Duke of York and the great young Earl of Warwick should demean themselves to write with their own hands to simple Elisabeth Woodville, though indeed she hath a very noble princess for her mother ! But methinks they might have employed their pens to a better purpose than to try to persuade a poor maiden to wed a landless knight, albeit a very excellent gentleman—I mean that long-patient, silent wooer you wot of, Sir Hugh John, who never could find

courage to speak for himself. And so nothing will serve this humble man but that the Duke of York, forsooth, must turn suitor in his behalf; for, saith his grace, 'he is credibly informed that his well-beloved knight Sir Hugh John, for the great womanhood and gentleness approved in my person, hath wholly given unto me his heart. Howbeit, he adds, my disposition towards him is yet unknown. But he doth heartily pray me to be well willed to the performing of this his desire, and I shall therein do him pleasure; and further, also, he doubts not my great weal and worship in time to come.' Great weal, in sooth, it should prove to live in Wales and be a poor man's wife! I had as lief be a nun. Howsoever, the duke adds, that if I fulfil his intent in this matter, he will be to him and me such lord as shall be to both our great advantage. This caused me to reflect a little, for to precipitate in these matters sheweth little prudence. John Gray also desires to do me worship in the way of marriage, and would be the best husband of the twain. But I would not suddenly deny the duke's wishing, and so wrote a humble letter to say the knight could come to Grafton,

and I would civilly entertain him ; which I did, to John Gray's no small discontent, who hath heard of it. But when Sir Hugh pressed his suit too warmly, I dismissed him with an obliging answer, neither wholly denying or allowing of his suit ; which is what her grace my mother advised me. But yesterday I received a letter from the Earl of Warwick which I copy entire, that you may judge if I have need of good counsel, when I am so pressed by two such mighty advocates.

‘Worshipful and well-beloved,—I greet you well. And forasmuch my right well-beloved Sir Hugh John, which now late was with you unto his full great joy, and had great cheer, as he saith (methinks the gentleman was easily contented), whereof I thank you, hath informed me now that he hath unto your person, as well as for the great seriousness and wisdom that he hath found and proved in you at that time, as for your great and praised beauty and womanly demeaning, he desireth with all haste to do you worship by the way of marriage, before any other creature living, as he saith. I, considering his said desire and the great worship that he had,

which was made knight at Jerusalem, and after his coming home, for the great wisdom and manhood that he was renowned of, was made Knight Marshal of France, and after of England, with other his great virtues and deserts, and also the good and notable service that he hath done and daily doth to me, write unto you at this time and pray you affectuously that you will the rather at this my request and prayer condescend to this his lawful and honest desire, wherein you shall provide notably for yourself unto your weal and worship in time to come, and cause me to show you such good patronage as you by reason of it shall hold you content and pleased, with the grace of God, which everlastingly have you in bliss, protection, and governance.

*'Written by the EARL OF WARWICK.'*

“Now, well-beloved Maud, herein lieth my perplexity. Patronage is good, but lands are better. The good lordship of these two great peers is not lightly to be thought of; but what if, gaining their favour, I should lose the good opinion of her majesty? Sir Hugh John is a sightly person and a valiant soldier; but methinks the Duchess of Bedford's daughter

should not be content to be called Lady John, and her fortunes to depend on a less person than the King. If I marry John Gray, then I wed the heir of the wealthy Lord Ferrers of Groby ; and if you and Margaret de Roos will be my good friends in this matter, and speak to the Queen, so that she shall discern that out of loyalty to her majesty I have refused the Duke of York's and Lord Warwick's suitor, then she will, I doubt not, bestow on me an equal dowry to that which she hath granted to Isminia Scales and Joan Dacre, that is, 200*l.* ; and then the Lord Ferrers shall be satisfied, for her grace my mother will give me the portion she hath promised, which you know ; and if so, I shall be well content to marry John Gray : in good hour be it. I beseech God send you good health and greater joy in one year than you have had in seven.

“Your loving true friend,

“ELISABETH WOODVILLE.

“*Written at Grafton Castle,  
Tuesday, 14th of July 1449.*”

“What think you ?” said Maud Everingham, when I returned to her this letter.

I smiled, and answered : “What I think

is, that Mistress Elisabeth hath the most innocent countenance and the profoundest cunning of any maiden of her years alive."

"Some are of opinion," Maud answered, "that she is simple."

"Well," I replied, "there is maybe some simplicity in the plain unvarnished avowal this letter doth contain. Even to a friend some would have feigned to be more generous, and less careful of their own weal."

"She is the most gentle person on the earth, and of so sweet a disposition that one must needs like her," Maud replied. "It is not to be credited how many gentlemen are in love with Bessy, though she is so silent and reserved that none can affirm she favours their suit. And for all that she has little or no tocher, few damsels have had so many offers of marriage."

"It is a noticeable thing," I answered, "that these silent women, if they have beauty and prudence, are the most apt to inspire love. As they show no marked preference for any one, all which admire them are like each to suppose he is most favoured. And if the lady only once smiles, or lifts up her downcast eyes,

or accepts a trifling service at his hands, my lord or master is straightway enraptured, and ready to fall at her feet. Then a sweet blush, and a 'Nay, nay, I pray your lordship,' or 'I beseech you, sir, forbear,' checks the presumptuous lover, and dismisses him for that time without more ado, but not quite in despair. O, I have watched these pretty tricks; and albeit two-thirds of the men in the world—yea, more perhaps—are justly served when women make fools of them, it mislikes me to see a good and brave gentleman like Sir Hugh John caught in these smooth traps."

"Nay," cried Maud, "you are too severe."

"You are too good," I said. "There is none, be they so full of defects as an egg is of meat, but you defend them. If the devil had need of an advocate—"

"Nay," she interrupted, with a pained countenance, "say not so, dear Meg. But methinks our Lord God used not bitter words even to the devil, but only drove him away with words of holy writ. But prithee, sweet lady, wilt thou move the Queen to do that good to Elisabeth?"

"For thy sake, Maud, and none other," I

replied. "But I would it had been thee, not she, that was to be married."

"Married!" she exclaimed. "I'll warrant thee I shall be more nobly wedded than poor Bessy."

"How so?" I asked, surprised.

"No meaner bridegroom than the King of kings can content my ambition," she said. And I then saw her intent was to be a nun. Well, the more I know and hear of courts, and the ups and downs and dire haps of this toilsome world, the greater groweth in me an esteem of the life religious persons lead, albeit I never found in myself any calling thereunto.

The Queen was well pleased to give Mistress Woodville a portion; for she said John Gray was a leal gentleman of good renown, and his father a devoted friend of the late king.

END OF VOL. I.

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